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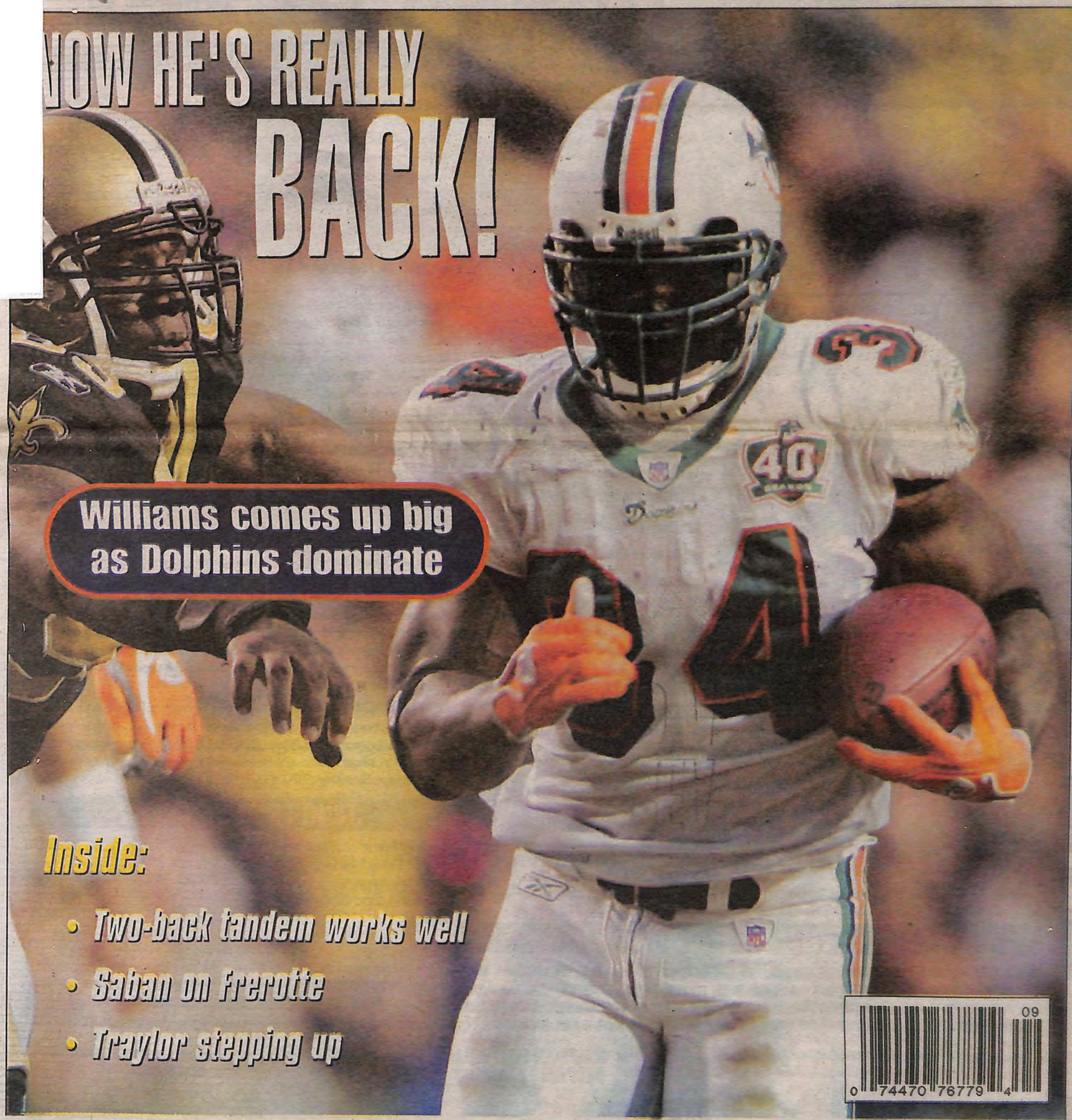
Dolphin DIGEST

Volume 34 • Number 9 • November 5, 2005 (892) $3.00



NOW HE'S REALLY BACK!

Williams comes up big as Dolphins dominate

Inside:

- Two-back tandem works well
- Saban on Frerotte
- Traylor stepping up

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DOLPHINS

EXCLUSIVE

DOLPHINS BRING HALL OF FAME EXHIBITION TO SOUTH FLORIDA

The Miami Dolphins Gallery of Legends offers Dol-Fans a glimpse of the first 40 seasons of one of the NFL's most successful franchises.

On August 7, 2005, Dan Marino became the ninth member of the Miami Dolphins to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. When Marino was voted to the Hall back in February, he challenged Dolphins fans to overrun Canton during the induction weekend. They responded in droves, turning that city into a sea of aqua and orange. The support Dan received that weekend from Dol-Fans was unprecedented, but many, many more were unable to attend the induction ceremony and share that memorable experience.

As a result, in an unprecedented move, Miami Dolphins owner H. Wayne Huizenga asked the Hall of Fame to bring the busts of the Miami Dolphins enshrinees and other exhibits from Canton to South Florida to allow the entire community to celebrate Dan's induction and the Dolphins' eight other Hall of Fame enshrinees.

As part of this celebration, all nine busts of the Dolphins Hall of Famers will be on display at Dolphins Stadium from Wednesday through November 5. This will mark the first time in the history of the Hall of Fame that these busts have left Canton, Ohio, since their individual enshrinement ceremony. The Pro Football Hall of Fame is also lending other exhibits featuring the Miami Dolphins and football in Florida for display at the stadium as featured attractions of this week-long celebration.

To honor their 40 years as part of the South Florida community, the Dolphins also have created special exhibits which will track the team's history from 1966 to the present. Features will include Dolphins memorabilia and photographs as well as elements of life in South Florida and a Dan Marino timeline through those years. At the conclusion of the week's festivities many of these artifacts will then form the nucleus of a permanent display at Dolphins Stadium honoring the club's history.

Don Shula's office from the team's former training facility at St. Thomas University has been recreated with all of the original items.

EVENT CALENDAR

DUE TO THE EFFECTS OF HURRICANE WILMA, THE OPENING OF THE GALLERY OF LEGENDS AND THE DOLPHINS HALL OF FAME EXHIBIT WILL NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC STARTING THIS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AND WILL RUN THROUGH SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6. IT WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 5-9 P.M. WEDNESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY AND FROM 10 A.M.-2 P.M. ON SATURDAY.

EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS

HALL OF FAME RING CEREMONY - The main event of the week's activities and attractions will occur during halftime of the Miami Dolphins-Atlanta Falcons game as Dan Marino will be presented with his Hall of Fame ring by a representative of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Joining Marino for this honor will be former Miami Dolphins Head Coach Don Shula and wide receivers Mark Duper and Mark Clayton, plus the other Miami Dolphins Pro Football Hall of Fame enshrinees and Dolphins alumni.

GALLERY OF LEGENDS - The busts of each Miami Dolphins enshrinee in the Pro Football Hall of Fame will be featured at the new Gallery of Legends at Gate D of Dolphins Stadium. In addition, other special exhibits from the Hall of Fame as well as other Dolphins memorabilia will be on display. At the conclusion of this event, the Gallery of Legends will feature many of these exhibits on a permanent display for Dol-Fans at the stadium. The Gallery will feature Miami Dolphins history as well as other Florida football elements including the Orange Bowl and Florida high school football.

DECADE EXHIBITS - A portion of the Club Level at Dolphins Stadium will be specially appointed for a journey through 40 years of Miami Dolphins football. Special exhibits will feature Dan Marino, the Miami Dolphins, South Florida pop culture and lifestyle from each decade. Cameras are encouraged as special photo opportunities will be located throughout the exhibits.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP - In support of the South Florida's School Systems, the exhibit will be open to school groups. Students will enjoy special activities and a unique opportunity to learn about South Florida lifestyle and the Miami Dolphins' unique bond with this community. Featured among its exhibits will be a special section for 2005 participants in the Fins Friday program. Each school's submission will be on display throughout the week-long celebration. For more information, please call the Miami Dolphins Community Relations Department at (954) 452-7000.

YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUES - Youth and high school football teams will have the opportunity to learn more about Dan Marino's path to success and the rich tradition of Miami Dolphins football. Reservations can be arranged in advance through the Miami Dolphins Community Relations Department by calling (954) 452-7000.

TICKETS AND ACCESS

Stadium Entry	Gate D
Season Ticket Holders	FREE
Daily Admission	$5.00
Children 12 and Under	FREE
Parking	FREE

Tickets available through the Dolphins Stadium Box Office or on-line at MiamiDolphins.com. Special Group Reservations, call (954) 452-7000.

Cameras encouraged. All net proceeds to benefit the Miami Dolphins Foundation.

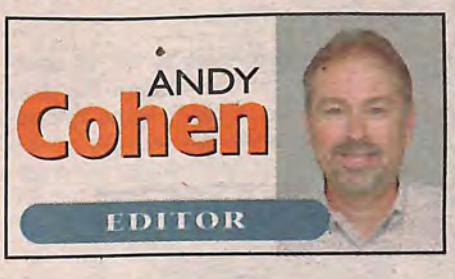
For more information on the week-long Hall of Fame celebration, log onto MiamiDolphins.com or call 1-888-FINS-TIX.

DOLPHINS FOOTBALL
DOLPHINS STADIUM

Perfect way to get some R&R

Now, that's more like it.

Ricky and Ronnie each stepping up. The defense attacking. Even the passing game showing some life. But before we break down a convincing



21-6 victory over the Saints, it is important to put the big picture into focus.

This was a huge win for the Dolphins. Not because they beat a good team, because the Saints are nothing of the kind. It was huge because it was the first road win of the Nick Saban era and because, after three straight losses, this team was in desperate need of a shot of confidence and because, with Atlanta and New England next on tap at home, a 3-4 record is far more palatable than a 2-5 nosedive.

With injuries in the defensive secondary, with the offense under heavy criticism, with the euphoria of a 2-1 start seeming like so long ago, with some blowhard named Wilma turning their lives upside down, the Dolphins desperately needed to feel good again. And feel good they do.

Granted, this is still a major work in progress. Penalties are far too abundant. Gus Frerotte still misses way too many open receivers. The secondary has some serious deficiencies. But, hey, why be picky at a time like this?

Of all the positives that came to the surface last Sunday at Saban's homecoming, the most pleasing from this vantage point was the emergence of Ricky Williams and Ronnie Brown as a legitimate one-two punch.

Got to admit I had serious doubts whether the two-back system could work in this manner. See, what Kansas City does effectively with Priest Holmes and Larry Johnson is give Holmes a couple of series of exclusivity and then Johnson one series. It keeps them fresh and focused.

But Saban's initial plan with Ronnie and Ricky — or is it Ricky and Ronnie? — was to use them together. Maybe not on most plays. But in every series, and in different ways. His reasoning was simple, and hard to dispute. These very well may be the two most talented players on the Dolphins offense. Why not get the most out of them as frequently as possible?

The problem with this thinking is that it can have a tendency to take away from each player. Both need the ball a lot to be effective. Both could be most dangerous after 15 or so carries with the defense wearing down. Sometimes when you have two running backs like this you could, in effect, have no running backs.

Rookie Ronnie Brown races downfield on his way to a 106-yard rushing performance.

Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

In Ricky's first two games after his suspension, this was the problem. Brown played well, but he could never actually take over the game. Williams clearly struggled with a more limited role. He had minus-1 yard rushing against Kansas City, the worst numbers of his career.

Just a hunch, but I believe Saban might have changed how he was utilizing the two if the Saints game had unfolded differently.

But now he's got a clear indication that it can work. Sure, one game does not create a trend. The two backs will have to continue what they did against an anemic Saints defense to keep justifying this way of thinking.

What a tasty first course it was, though.

Ronnie got 106 yards on 23 carries. Ricky got 82 yards on 17 carries. Each averaged more than 4.5 yards a pop. You want historical perspective? This was the first time in 26 years a pair of Dolphins back had each rushed for at least 80 yards in the same game.

They seemed to work well together. Both got into a rhythm. Each seemed to feed off one another. Ronnie rambles for 22. Two plays later, Ricky rumbles for 10. They both run pass routes. They both block. Sometimes they alternated plays. Sometimes one went two plays and then the other came in. A few times each had a series all to himself.

How ironic. A year ago, the Dolphins couldn't find a running back. Now they've got two legitimate studs. Why not ride them as long as they can? On a team still searching for an identity, the tenacity of these co-feature backs could prove to be contagious.

While there are no guarantees, what better alternative do the Dolphins have? After seven games, it is now pretty obvious that they can't be carried by the right arm of Frerotte. It is equally obvious that the defense can not dominate every game and that, in fact, it needs to blitz an awful lot to make life tolerable for the secondary. But with two backs controlling the tempo, keeping the heat off Frerotte, keeping the defense on the bench, well, at least they've got something going here.

Ricky looks sharp, almost as if he was never away. He still gains the tough inside yards, but at a lighter weight has the speed to easily outrun defensive backs. If there is a lack of desire after a year away from football, it is impossible to detect.

Ronnie is legit. He runs as hard as any back in the league. All those who predicted that Cadillac Williams should have been the choice might want to re-think that logic right about now. For the long term, for his size and strength and ability to withstand a pounding, Ronnie may already be proving that he was the best back to come out of the 2005 draft.

You can break down the victory over the Saints all you want, but there is no denying this fact: The Dolphins had the best two running backs on the field. If that truth remains Sunday against Atlanta and then the next Sunday against New England, then this season might not be a throwaway after all.

Yes, there are still some significant problem areas. The talent in some spots just isn't there. Depth is also a major concern. But two great players on offense can mean so much to the psyche of an entire team.

Ricky and Ronnie. Ronnie and Ricky. Doesn't really matter who comes first because the Miami Dolphins desperately need both. If the events of last Sunday indeed provided the first real indication of what they can do together, then it could very well go down as much more meaningful than just a third notch in the win column.

Letters to our readers

Due to numerous problems arising from the aftermath of Hurricane Wilma, this issue of *Dolphin Digest* was printed and mailed from Pennsylvania. We certainly apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

In addition, the Oct. 29 issue of *Dolphin Digest* did not go to press due to power outages caused by Hurricane Wilma. This week's issue contains much of the pertinent information you would have received in the Oct. 29 issue.

We anticipate returning to our normal print schedule for next week's issue. We thank you for your patience during this difficult time.

Dolphin Digest

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On the Cover ...

Ricky Williams had by far his best performance of the season Sunday against his former team as he helped the Dolphins snap a three-game losing streak with a 21-6 victory over New Orleans at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, La.

Cover Photo/ CHRIS GRAYTHEN/Getty Images

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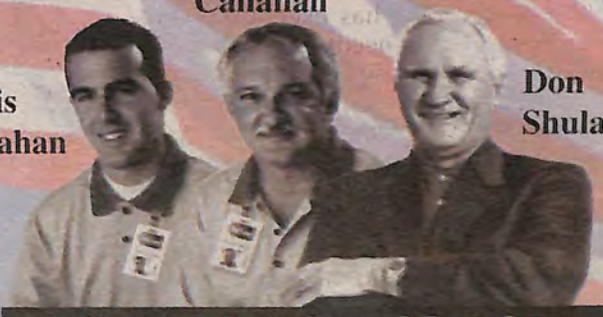

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Too much emphasis on QB play

I thought Gus Frerotte did a much better job managing the game against the Saints. He made some nice throws and some good decisions. Those are things we need to continue to see from Gus.

I'm sure that in general Gus would say there are things that he feels he could do a lot better. Our disposition as a coaching staff is that we want to help him be able to execute more consistently. But at the same time the people around you have a direct effect on you in terms of how they perform, what their consistency is and how you get protected.

NICK **Saban**

HEAD COACH

For everybody to think that if we changed quarterbacks everything is going to be fine, I don't think that's the answer. I think we have to play and execute better as an offensive team. I think it would be a terrible mistake to burden one position with what has happened to this point.

Everybody probably gives the quarterback position too much credit when you have success and too much blame when you don't. It's the nature of the position. It's the nature of the beast. I played that position, so I understand it.

We had great balance against the Saints. We were effective in using both running backs. Ricky Williams and Ronnie Brown are outstanding players. Other teams that have two outstanding players at the same position alternate them in and out. We have tried to do a little more than just alternating them. Hopefully that will continue to pay some dividends for us. If it doesn't, maybe we'll alternate them more in the future the way other teams do. We'll have to see what happens.

But we've got to create ways for these guys to get the ball more. For Ricky Williams to have the production he had against Tampa Bay and Kansas City isn't good. Now the game itself affects that some because we get behind or we don't sustain drives, so we don't get enough plays to get people involved the way they need to be. We have to do a better job at that like we did against the Saints.

It's important that our whole team works to establish an identity. What do people we compete against say about us? That's something we have to ask ourselves. What we want people to say about us is: "I hate playing those guys. They are physical. They play with a tremendous amount of toughness and tenacity. They've got a great sense of urgency in what they do, and they play smart and don't make a lot of mistakes." That's what you want people to say.

Quarterback Gus Frerotte prepares to fire a deep pass during last Sunday's victory over the New Orleans Saints.
Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

I felt like we had a better identity earlier in the season. We created things, we had an impact on the tempo of the game. We struggled to run the ball, but we showed some tenacity. We did a better job of taking what the defense gave us. I think people have done a better job of taking some of those things away.

I think we need to continue to develop ways to get the ball in our playmakers' hands in a more consistent fashion and be able to sustain drives offensively, which we haven't done enough of recently. We have to give ourselves an opportunity to create better field position and to improve in the red zone and certainly to improve in third-down situations. We're better on third down when we don't have third-and-long; so that's an accumulation of what you do on first and second down.

We also need to do a better job managing our frustration because I can tell you that our frustration in games when we get behind affects our ability to perform. That means the scoreboard is determining how we play, and that's not good. That has to be fixed.

* * *

The A.J. Feeley trade was the best deal we could make. Nobody likes to give up draft picks.

It was initiated by the fact that, relative to the salary-cap side of it, after this season we probably could not have afforded to have a third-team quarterback in this financial position. So there was some advantage in taking the salary acceleration now and getting our cap in a better position for the future so we would have more flexibility next year.

We felt it was important to replace Feeley with someone who we felt had the potential to be a developmental type of quarterback and who had a lot of ability. I believe Cleo Lemon fits that description. We had started evaluating him a while ago and certainly he has excellent arm strength. He just needs to develop in some areas because he hasn't played very much.

San Diego was the only team that was really interested because of their circumstances. They have two quarterbacks and one of them may be leaving at the end of this season, so they were looking for a more veteran guy who could be a No. 2 possibly. If we were going to have a No. 3 on the roster, we wanted someone who we could develop for the future.

Quarterback is a difficult position to judge, maybe more so than any other position. Talent can only get you so far. There are so many other intangibles to take into consideration. Decision-making is probably at the top of that list.

You look at the Patriots and what they have done with Tom Brady, who was taken in the sixth round, so you know it's possible to find an excellent quarterback who wasn't drafted high. It doesn't happen often, but it could happen and we're never going to stop searching for that player.

It's difficult to develop young quarterbacks in this league. They don't get an opportunity to practice very much. You can't play them very much. When a guy gets put into a position before he is ready to, he obviously is going to have a much bigger opportunity to fail, to get frustrated and not develop the confidence he needs to be successful. That's why you've got to approach things in the right manner with a young quarterback.

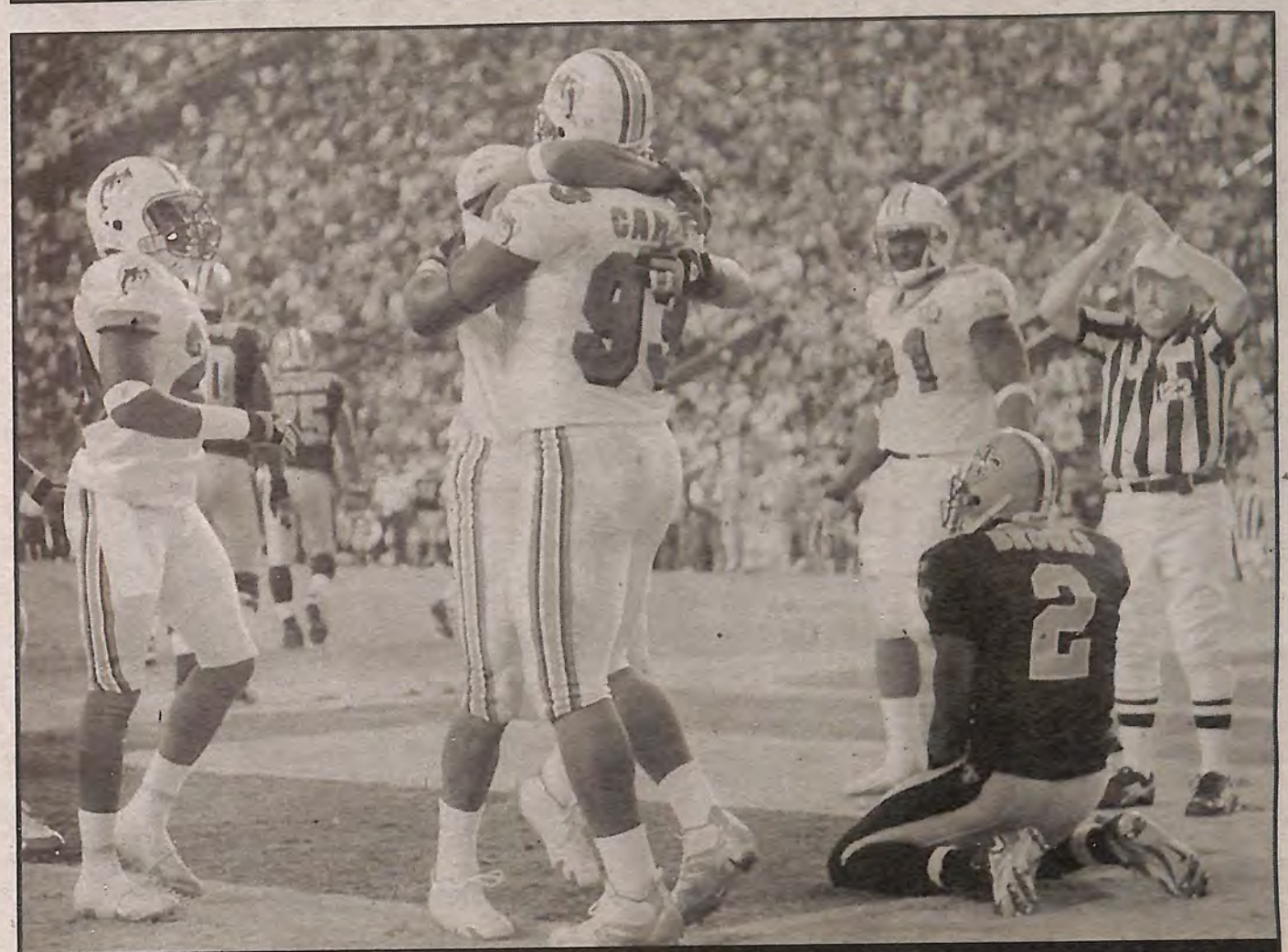
Even some of the quarterbacks who turned out to be successful players were not exceptional at the beginning. It takes time and patience.

A.J. Feeley worked very hard for us. He had an opportunity here. We feel badly that we were not able to help him take advantage of that opportunity. This organization made a commitment to him. We wanted to give him every opportunity to succeed. I feel some of the responsibility that he wasn't able to succeed.

Send in questions for Coach Saban

Dolphins coach Nick Saban will periodically answer fans' questions in his column. You can either e-mail your questions to digest@curtispub.net or mail them to Dolphin Digest, P.O. Box 526600, Miami, FL 33152. Please be brief with your questions.

Miami 21, New Orleans 6



SAFETY DANCE — Kevin Carter gets a hug from Jason Taylor after his third-quarter sack in the end zone gave the Dolphins their first safety of the season. *Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins*

What they said ...

• "I really do feel like this was coming home to play a game and it was exciting for me even though I didn't say it (earlier). It was exciting to be back in Tiger Stadium and I feel really great that our team did a nice job to make us proud of how they played."

— Coach Nick Saban

• "It's fun to get back to winning and hopefully we can get a streak going. All the distractions we had this week, we came together today."

— LB Zach Thomas

Play to remember

The Dolphins trailed 3-0 when they had a third-and-5 from the Saints 7-yard line in the first quarter. Randy McMichael ran a pass pattern across the middle and couldn't handle a Gus Frerotte throw that was slightly behind him. It bounced off McMichael, right into the hands of Saints safety Dwight Smith in the end zone. Smith appeared headed for a very long return, but he tripped over a teammate, lost the ball as he fell down and Vernon Carey recovered to give the Dolphins the ball back with a first-and-10 *at the New Orleans 29.*

the game at a glance

• **Dolphins record:** 3-4
• **This time last year:** 1-6
• **Stat that stands out:** The Dolphins stopped New Orleans on all 11 of the Saints' third-down conversions.
• **Turning point:** The Dolphins led 6-3 late in the first half when New Orleans had a third-and-6 from the Miami 46-yard line. After safety Yeremiah Bell sacked Aaron Brooks for a hard-to-believe 26-yard loss and Mitch Berger mis-hit a 32-yard punt, it was the Dolphins who found themselves with a scoring opportunity with a first down at their own 40. They made good on it, getting a field goal to increase their lead to 9-3.
• **Second-guessing time:** The Dolphins made the right calls most of the game, but they had the momentum after taking a 6-3 lead and then stopping the Saints, so why run the ball on third-and-8 from their own 36-yard line? Ricky Williams was stopped after a 4-yard gain and the Dolphins had to punt.
• **Worth noting:** Among the signs seen at Tiger Stadium that played off the CBS initials was one that read: "Can't Beat Saban." ... Defensive end Kevin Carter became the third active player in the league to reach 90 career sacks when he got to Aaron Brooks for a third-quarter safety.

By the numbers

47: Rushing attempts by the Dolphins, their most in a regular season game since the 1982 opener.

97: Consecutive passes thrown against the Dolphins without an interception before Reggie Howard picked off Aaron Brooks in the third quarter.

23: Number of games played since the Dolphins had last held an opponent without a touchdown.

Mandich's take

What does Jim Mandich think about this week's Dolphins game? Mandich — former player, talk show host and long-time Dolphins color analyst — will provide his unique insights after every game.

◆◆◆

The run-up to the game was as unusual as one can remember. It had Nick Saban going back to LSU. It had Ricky Williams going back to Louisiana to play against his former team, the Saints, and you had two teams that had endured hurricanes crises of their own, the Saints with Katrina and the Dolphins with Wilma. So just kind of a bizarre roll-up.

And it was a clash of two teams, to be generous, you would say were subpar. The Dolphins, with three losses in a row and troubles on the road. I was curious to see how they would perform and they did damn good and it helped that they were going against a horrendous team.

And Aaron Brooks was absolutely dazed and confused. I don't remember seeing a more abysmal quarterback performance than I saw out of Brooks today. I think the Dolphins understood that if they put the heat on him he would panic, so on every passing down I think there was some kind of blitz out of the Dolphins defense.

Gus Frerotte played better and it looked like Nick Saban finally figured out how to use the two strengths of his team, Ricky Williams and Ronnie Brown. Brown had over 100 and Ricky had close to 100, so they had damn near 200 yards, which was very encouraging.

The defensive backs? Whether it was a combination of Aaron Brooks being very bad or whether it was the blitzes that had him panicky or whether they just got better, I counted 11 or 12 third-down situations in which the Saints were unable to keep the drive alive.

So a win that was very much needed because this team was starved for a win and the Dolphins came away with that.

Now they look ahead to the Atlanta Falcons followed by the New England Patriots, and the quality of the competition will ratchet up considerably.

Inside the Game

Ricky enjoys productive reunion

By LES EAST
Digest Correspondent

BATON ROUGE, La. — Ricky Williams showed signs of his old self when he played against his old team Sunday.

Williams, who had 7 yards on 11 carries coming into the game, had by far his biggest impact of the three games he has played this season, gaining 82 yards on 17 carries in Miami's 21-6 victory over New Orleans.

"I got into a groove and it was nice," Williams said. "We were able to sustain drives and run the ball more. The biggest thing was being able to get into a rhythm. We did a much better job of converting on third down (7-of-18). We established the run and really got after it."

Williams entered the game midway through the first quarter. He was greeted by boos from many of the Saints fans.

On his first carry, Williams gained 11 yards and a first down. The boos got louder. Two plays later he gained 5 yards and the boos remained loud.

"I didn't really hear the boos," Williams said. "But they're supposed to boo players that come back like I did. We played a preseason game in New Orleans two years ago and the boos were much stronger then. But I don't think they were booing from the heart. I think they were booing because that was what they were supposed to do."

Eventually the boos died down as the Dolphins seized control of the game. Williams said during the week that this game against the team that traded him to Miami in March 2002 after three seasons in New Orleans wasn't special. He said after the game that he felt differently.

"I didn't think it would be very special," Williams said. "Coming back to a franchise, to an organization that I worked with for three years, it felt good to be back here. It was good to see a lot of old friends."

Ricky Williams said he was surprised by how much he actually enjoyed playing against the Saints, the team with which he began his NFL career. *Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins*

Rookie running back Ronnie Brown surpassed Williams' output, gaining 106 yards on 23 carries.

"Ronnie and I were both able to stay pretty fresh," Williams said. "It was fun. Ronnie and I feed off of each other. It makes it really tough on the other team. We're different types of runners and we both kept coming after them."

The Dolphins' defense kept coming after Saints quarterback Aaron Brooks, harassing him into a miserable day. He completed 14 of 31 for 181 yards. He threw an interception and was sacked six times for 68 yards in losses, including a safety.

"That's his problem," defensive end Jason Taylor said. "Our job is to do that to him. We did a good job of mixing it up and coming at him from different places. We forced him into mistakes. The front four did a great job today, dominating the game from beginning to end."

New Orleans had just 203 yards of total offense and didn't convert any of its third downs. Coming in, Miami had allowed 35 of 88 third downs to be converted.

"We worked hard on third downs this week," middle linebacker Zach Thomas said. "Our pressure really got to them and we stopped the run first. When you can make the other team one-dimensional, this scheme really works."

Quarterback Gus Frerotte, whose job security came into question after the loss to Kansas City, played efficiently. He completed 16 of 28 passes for 168 yards with one touchdown and one interception.

In the 30-20 loss to the Chiefs, Frerotte completed 11 of 29 for 125 yards with no touchdowns and one interception.

"I told the guys I didn't play well last week," Frerotte said. "You just have to stand up and take it and play through it. The running game was great. We really focused this week on each play. We emphasized focusing on executing for eight seconds, then taking a break. Then you come back and forget the last play or the last series and move on and focus on the next eight seconds.

"We showed today the kind of team that we can have. If everybody does their job, this is how we can play."

The Dolphins never gave Aaron Brooks much breathing room last Sunday, with Donnie Spragan (l.) and Jason Taylor among those who got up close and personal with the New Orleans quarterback.

Photos/CHRIS GRAYTHEN/Getty Images (Spragan) and DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

DOLPHINS STATISTICS

GAME SUMMARY

	1	2	3	4	TOT
Dolphins	3	6	2	10	21
Saints	3	0	3	0	6

Scoring Summary

1st Quarter: NO - FG: John Carney 26 yd. Plays: 10; Yards: 57; Time: 5:01.
MIA - FG: Olindo Mare 37 yd. Plays: 7; Yards: 10; Time: 3:14.
2nd Quarter: MIA - FG: Olindo Mare 36 yd. Plays: 14; Yards: 62; Time: 5:34.
MIA - FG: Olindo Mare 41 yd. Plays: 8; Yards: 37; Time: 1:43
3rd Quarter: NO - FG: John Carney 49 yd. Plays: 4; Yards: minus-2; Time: 1:05.
MIA - SAF Kevin Carter sacked Aaron Brooks in end zone
4th Quarter: MIA - TD: Chris Chambers 12 yd pass from Gus Frerotte (Olindo Mare kick). Plays: 5; Yards: 51; Time: 2:43.
MIA - FG: Olindo Mare 46 yd. Plays: 8; Yards: 33; Time: 3:46

Team Statistics

	MIA	NO
First Downs	20	14
Rushing	10	3
Passing	7	9
Penalty	3	2
3rd-Down efficiency	7-18	0-11
4th-Down efficiency	0-0	0-2
Total net yards	342	203
Total plays	77	54
Average gain	4.4	3.8
Net yards rushing	188	90
Rushes	47	17
Average per rush	4.0	5.3
Net yards passing	154	113
Completed-attempted	16-28	14-31
Yards per pass	5.1	3.1
Sacked-yards lost	2-14	6-68
Had intercepted	1	1
Return Yardage	91	103
Punts-returns	1-11	0-0
Kickoffs-returns	4-75	3-75
Interceptions-returns	1-5	1-28
Penalties-yards	5-34	8-77
Fumbles-lost	2-1	3-1
Time of Possession	36:23	23:37

Miami Dolphins Player Statistics

Missed field goals: Olindo Mare 36
Rushing: Ronnie Brown 23-106, Ricky Williams 17-82, Chris Chambers 1-1, Gus Frerotte 6-minus 1
Passing: Gus Frerotte 16-28 for 168 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT
Receiving: Chris Chambers 4-25, Marty Booker 3-40, Randy McMichael 3-20, Wes Welker 3-17, Ronnie Brown 2-12, David Boston 1-54
Tackles-Assists-Sacks (unofficial): Vonnie Holliday 6-0-1, Channing Crowder 5-1-0, Reggie Howard 4-0-0, Travis Daniels 3-0-0, Keith Traylor 2-2-1, Jeff Zgonina 2-2-1, Travares Tillman 2-2-0, Kevin Carter 2-0-1, David Bowens 2-0-0, Jason Taylor 2-0-0, Kiwaukee Thomas 2-0-0, Zach Thomas 2-0-0, Lance Schulters 1-1-0, Yeremiah Bell 1-0-1, Jason Glenn 1-0-0, Rex Hadnot 1-0-0, Travis Minor 1-0-0, Derrick Pope 1-0-0
Interceptions: Reggie Howard 1 for 5 yards
Kickoff Returns: Wes Welker 4 for 75 yards
Punt Returns: Wes Welker 1 for 11 yards
Fumbles Lost: Gus Frerotte 1

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PRESEASON			
Aug. 8	L	24-27	Chicago (Hall of Fame Game)
Aug. 13	L	17-27	at Jacksonville
Aug. 20	L	3-17	at Pittsburgh
Aug. 27	W	17-14	TAMPA BAY
Sept. 1	L	17-20	ATLANTA
REGULAR SEASON			
Sept. 11	W	34-10	DENVER
Sept. 18	L	7-17	at N.Y. Jets
Sept. 25	W	27-24	CAROLINA
Oct. 2		BYE WEEK	
Oct. 9	L	14-20	at Buffalo
Oct. 16	L	13-27	at Tampa Bay
Oct. 21	L	20-30	KANSAS CITY
Oct. 30	W	21-6	New Orleans (at Baton Rouge)
Nov. 6			ATLANTA 1 p.m.
Nov. 13			NEW ENGLAND 1 p.m.
Nov. 20			at Cleveland 1 p.m.
Nov. 27			at Oakland 4:05 p.m.
Dec. 4			BUFFALO 1 p.m.
Dec. 11			at San Diego 4:15 p.m.
Dec. 18			N.Y. JETS 1 p.m.
Dec. 24			TENNESSEE 1 p.m.
Jan. 1			at New England 1 p.m.

	Miami	Opponent
Total First Downs	110	136
Rushing	35	38
Passing	65	81
Penalty	10	17
3rd Down: Made/Att	34/96	35/99
3rd Down Pct.	35.4%	35.4%
4th Down: Made/Att	2/7	1/7
4th Down Pct.	28.6%	14.3%
Possession Avg.	27:08	32:52
Total Net Yards	*2234*	*2125*
Avg. Per Game	319.1	303.6
Total Plays	439	463
Avg. Per Play	5.1	4.6
Net Yards Rushing	820	783
Avg. Per Game	117.1	111.9
Total Rushes	180	212
Net Yards Passing	1414	1342
Avg. Per Game	202.0	191.7
Sacked/Yards Lost	12/72	21/212
Gross Yards	1486	1554
Attempts/Completions	247/128	230/132
Completion Pct.	51.8%	57.4%
Had Intercepted	8	4
Punts/Average	37/43.2	42/46.6
Net Punting Avg.	39.4	38.5
Penalties/Yards	70/521	47/420
Fumbles/Ball Lost	16/7	17/6
Touchdowns	14	14
Rushing	4	5
Passing	9	8
Returns	1	1

Score By Periods	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	Pts
Team	23	22	26	65	0	136
Opponents	40	34	30	30	0	134

Scoring	TD	Ru	Pa	Rt	PAT	FG	2Pt	Pts
O.Mare	0	0	0	0	14/14	12/14	0	50
R.McMichael	4	0	4	0	0/0	0/0	0	24
C.Chambers	3	0	3	0	0/0	0/0	0	18
R.Brown	3	3	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	18
W.Heller	1	0	1	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
M.Booker	1	0	1	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
S.Morris	1	1	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
J.Taylor	1	0	0	1	0/0	0/0	0	6
K.Carter	0	0	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	2
Team	**14**	**4**	**9**	**1**	**14/14**	**12/14**	**0**	**136**
Opponents	**14**	**5**	**8**	**1**	**14/14**	**12/12**	**0**	**134**

2-Pt. Conversions: Team 0/ 0, Opponents: 0/ 0

AFC EAST STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	DIV
New England	4	3	0	.571	159	180	2-1	2-2	1-0
Miami	**3**	**4**	**0**	**.429**	**136**	**134**	**2-1**	**1-3**	**0-2**
Buffalo	3	5	0	.375	128	159	3-1	0-4	2-1
N.Y. Jets	2	5	0	.286	92	139	2-1	0-4	1-1

Rushing	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
R.Brown	114	544	4.8	65t	3
C.Chambers	6	95	15.8	61	0
R.Williams	28	89	3.2	16	0
S.Morris	11	47	4.3	9t	1
G.Frerotte	13	23	1.8	13	0
T.Minor	5	17	3.4	9	0
W.Welker	1	5	5.0	5	0
D.Jones	1	0	0.0	0	0
H.Evans	1	0	0.0	0	0
Team	**180**	**820**	**4.6**	**65t**	**4**
Opponents	**212**	**783**	**3.7**	**57t**	**5**

Receiving	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
C.Chambers	27	377	14.0	77t	3
R.McMichael	25	249	10.0	30t	4
M.Booker	17	290	17.1	60t	1
R.Brown	17	114	6.7	38	0
W.Welker	16	260	16.3	41	0
R.Williams	6	22	3.7	6	0
D.Boston	4	80	20.0	54	0
S.Morris	4	44	11.0	18	0
H.Evans	4	17	4.3	5	0
L.Diamond	4	16	4.0	7	0
B.Gilmore	2	16	8.0	12	0
W.Heller	*1*	*1*	*1.0*	*1t*	*1*
T.Minor	1	0	0.0	0	0
Team	**128**	**1486**	**11.6**	**77t**	**9**
Opponents	**132**	**1554**	**11.8**	**53t**	**8**

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
L.Schulters	2	62	31.0	37	0
R.Howard	1	5	5.0	5	0
T.Daniels	1	4	4.0	4	0
Team	**4**	**71**	**17.8**	**37**	**0**
Opponents	**8**	**61**	**7.6**	**28**	**0**

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Net	TB	In	Lg	B
D.Jones	36	1592	44.2	40.3	3	10	60	0
O.Mare	1	8	8.0	8.0	0	0	8	0
Team	**37**	**1600**	**43.2**	**39.4**	**3**	**10**	**60**	**0**
Opponents	**42**	**1958**	**46.6**	**38.5**	**4**	**15**	**63**	**0**

Punt Returns	Ret	FC	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
W.Welker	22	11	263	12.0	47	0
Team	**22**	**11**	**263**	**12.0**	**47**	**0**
Opponents	**17**	**8**	**82**	**4.8**	**13**	**0**

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
W.Welker	31	664	21.4	28	0
W.Heller	1	11	11.0	11	0
Team	**32**	**675**	**21.1**	**28**	**0**
Opponents	**19**	**471**	**24.8**	**53**	**0**

Field Goals	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
O.Mare	0/ 0	3/ 4	4/ 5	4/ 4	1/ 1
Team	**0/ 0**	**3/ 4**	**4/ 5**	**4/ 4**	**1/ 1**
Opponents	**0/ 0**	**3/ 3**	**3/ 3**	**3/ 3**	**3/ 3**

Sacks: K.Carter 4.0, J.Taylor 3.0, Y.Bell 2.0, T.Jones 2.0, L.Schulters 2.0, Z.Thomas 2.0, K.Traylor 1.0, J.Seau 1.0, V.Holliday 1.0, J.Zgonina 1.0, R.Howard 1.0. **Team: 20.0, Opponents: 12.0**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	Cmp%	Yds/Att	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Long	Sack	Lost	Rating
G.Frerotte	245	127	1409	51.8%	5.8	8	3.3%	8	3.3%	60t	12	72	66.5
S.Rosenfels	1	1	77	100.0%	77.0	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	77t	0	0	158.3
M.Booker	1	0	0	0.0%	0.0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	39.6
Team	**247**	**128**	**1486**	**51.8%**	**6.0**	**9**	**3.6%**	**8**	**3.2%**	**77t**	**12**	**72**	**69.0**
Opponents	**230**	**132**	**1554**	**57.4%**	**6.8**	**8**	**3.5%**	**4**	**1.7%**	**53t**	**21**	**212**	**82.4**

Dolphins Report Card

Game 7 • Miami 21, New Orleans 6

By Tom Curtis

QUARTERBACK • GRADE: C

POSITIVES: Gus Frerotte completed 16 of 28 passes for 168 yards and made his best throws of the day on the fourth-quarter TD drive, when he hit Marty Booker for 20 yards and Chris Chambers for the score.

NEGATIVES: Frerotte did not show good touch and missed several wide open deep receivers. He fumbled twice and was sacked two times for minus-14 yards. He missed Wes Welker open for a TD.

BOTTOM LINE: Frerotte did not throw with the accuracy needed to win on a regular basis in the NFL, although he made clutch throws late. His QB rating was 71.7, but the interception was not his fault.

RUNNING BACKS • GRADE: A

POSITIVES: Ronnie Brown and Ricky Williams combined for 188 yards on the ground and both showed excellent quickness and did a good job of finding the running lanes. Brown had a 35-yard run.

NEGATIVES: Neither Brown nor Williams were effective in the passing game and both had trouble blocking New Orleans blitzers. Sammy Morris and Lorenzo Diamond did little as the fullbacks.

BOTTOM LINE: The running game is what allowed the Dolphins to possess the ball for more than 36 minutes. Brown justified his No. 2 draft status and Williams hushed those who said he had lost it.

RECEIVERS • GRADE: B-

POSITIVES: All the receivers got open, especially Welker, but the QB did not get them the ball. David Boston had a 54-yard catch, Chambers scored the only TD, and Marty Booker had a 20-yard catch.

NEGATIVES: Randy McMichael's miss near the goal line turned into an interception. Booker and McMichael had penalties; Chambers got 1 yard on a reverse. Diamond fell down on the only pass thrown his way.

BOTTOM LINE: With two receptions of more than 20 yards and 168 passing yards, the passing game was mediocre. Big catches by Boston, Chambers and Booker, however, were instrumental in the victory.

OFFENSIVE LINE • GRADE: B

POSITIVES: Rex Hadnot got out in front and made several excellent blocks to help Brown and Williams have good gains. Seth McKinney, Jeno James and the two tackles gave great effort in protecting Frerotte.

NEGATIVES: James was beaten cleanly on a 3-yard loss by Brown and Damion McIntosh on one of the sacks. The O-line had difficulty picking up the blitzers when the Saints chose to rush more than four.

BOTTOM LINE: This unit shares in the success of the running game, which averaged more than 4 yards per attempt. The inside three played very well, while the tackles struggled in pass protection.

DEFENSIVE LINE • GRADE: A

POSITIVES: It was the best game of the year by Keith Traylor, who stuffed a third-and-1 and had a sack; Kevin Carter, who scored a safety; and Vonnie Holliday, who had six tackles and a sack.

NEGATIVES: Jason Taylor had an illegal contact penalty that nullified a sack by Donnie Spragan. The Saints averaged 5.3 yards per rush attempt, although they ran the ball just 17 times.

BOTTOM LINE: The play of every player on the D-line contributed to the Saints totaling just 203 yards and not scoring a touchdown. The tackling was excellent and there was consistent pressure on the QB.

LINEBACKERS • GRADE: B+

POSITIVES: Zach Thomas did not need to make as many plays, with Channing Crowder and the extra DBs making many of the tackles. Crowder had his best game, with six tackles and several big hits.

NEGATIVES: A blitz by the linebackers in the first quarter allowed a 23-yard run, the longest of the game. The New Orleans running backs had gains of 14 and 11 yards on short passes in the flat.

BOTTOM LINE: The linebackers were very effective in blitzing and did not miss Junior Seau, who was inactive for a second straight game. Crowder and Spragan made plays that helped win the game.

SECONDARY • GRADE: A-

POSITIVES: Reggie Howard and Travis Daniels did a good job in not allowing big plays. Travares Tillman and Lance Schulters were solid in pass coverage. Howard had an interception and two passes defensed.

NEGATIVES: Schulters chose to make a big hit instead of going for the ball two times. Howard was beaten for 29 yards by Donte Stallworth. Kiwaukee Thomas had an illegal contact penalty.

BOTTOM LINE: The all-out blitzes that involved players from the secondary were very effective. With Sam Madison missing the game, Howard and Daniels had solid games at the corner.

SPECIAL TEAMS • GRADE: A-

POSITIVES: Donnie Jones (46-yard average) and Olindo Mare were outstanding (4-for-5 on field goals). The coverage teams allowed no long returns, with Derrick Pope and Jason Glenn leading the way.

NEGATIVES: Alonzo Ephraim had a holding penalty on a kickoff and Pope one for running into the kicker. Mare missed his final field goal attempt, which would have put the game out of reach.

BOTTOM LINE: Jones showed why he leads the AFC in net punting by hitting a 59-yarder and allowing no return yardage. Mare was solid despite an injury that threatened to keep him out of the game.

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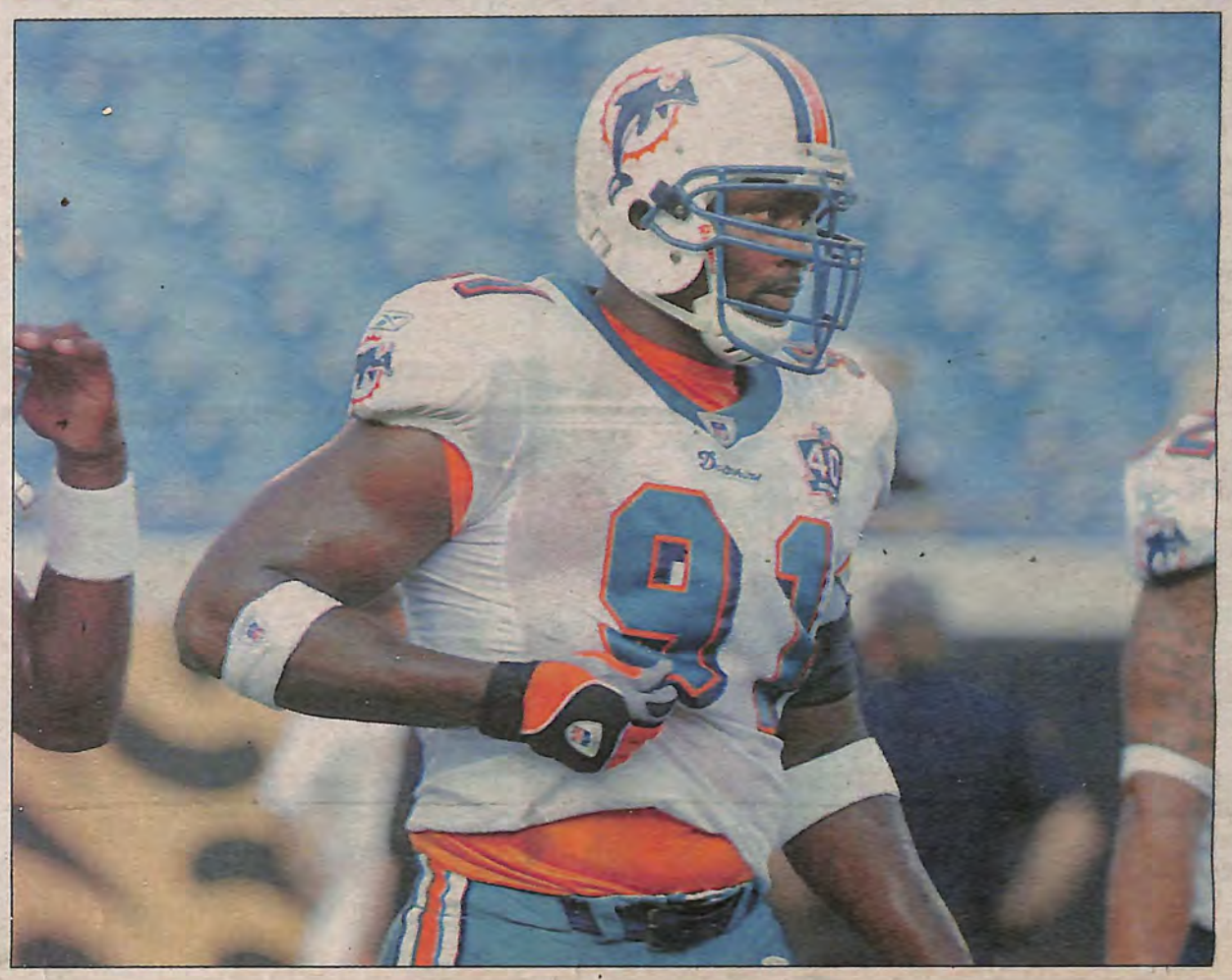
Firenze Group PLAYER of the WEEK



VONNIE HOLLIDAY

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

Relentless pressure by the Dolphins was the biggest story of the victory over New Orleans, and the group effort was led by Vonnie Holliday.

In addition to leading the team with six unassisted tackles and recording one of Miami's six sacks, Holliday's pressure also led to Kevin Carter's sack for a safety and later a holding penalty on a Saints offensive lineman.

For his effort, Holliday is the Firenze Group Player of the Week.

Also deserving mention were running backs Ronnie Brown and Ricky Williams, Carter and defensive tackle Jeff Zgonina.

The Firenze Group Player of the Week for the Kansas City game was Brown, who rushed for 95 yards, including a 65-yard touchdown against the Chiefs.

Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL

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Closing the book on a bad deal

By ANDY COHEN
Editor

The A.J. Feeley chapter officially ended on Oct. 18, and the trade to get him will go down as one of the worst moves in the 40-year history of the Miami Dolphins.

Opinion

It is easy now to look back and question the sanity of giving the Philadelphia Eagles a No. 2 draft choice for a player with hardly a track record on any level. But even at the time, we wondered out loud how Rick Spielman could justify the trade in a market where a No. 2 pick had gotten the Eagles and Patriots such legitimate stars as Terrell Owens and Corey Dillon, respectively.

A.J. Feeley? The owner of the Dolphins came out and said he could be the next Dan Marino. Obviously everyone was taken for a ride on this deal.

What was Spielman thinking? I can only surmise it this way: The Dolphins desperately needed to bring in a quarterback. They had lost out on veteran Mark Brunell. The market for quarterbacks wasn't deep to begin with. The first-year general manager of the Dolphins had to do something in a hurry.

He became enamored with the few game tapes he had of Feeley, he got some bad advice, and ultimately he panicked.

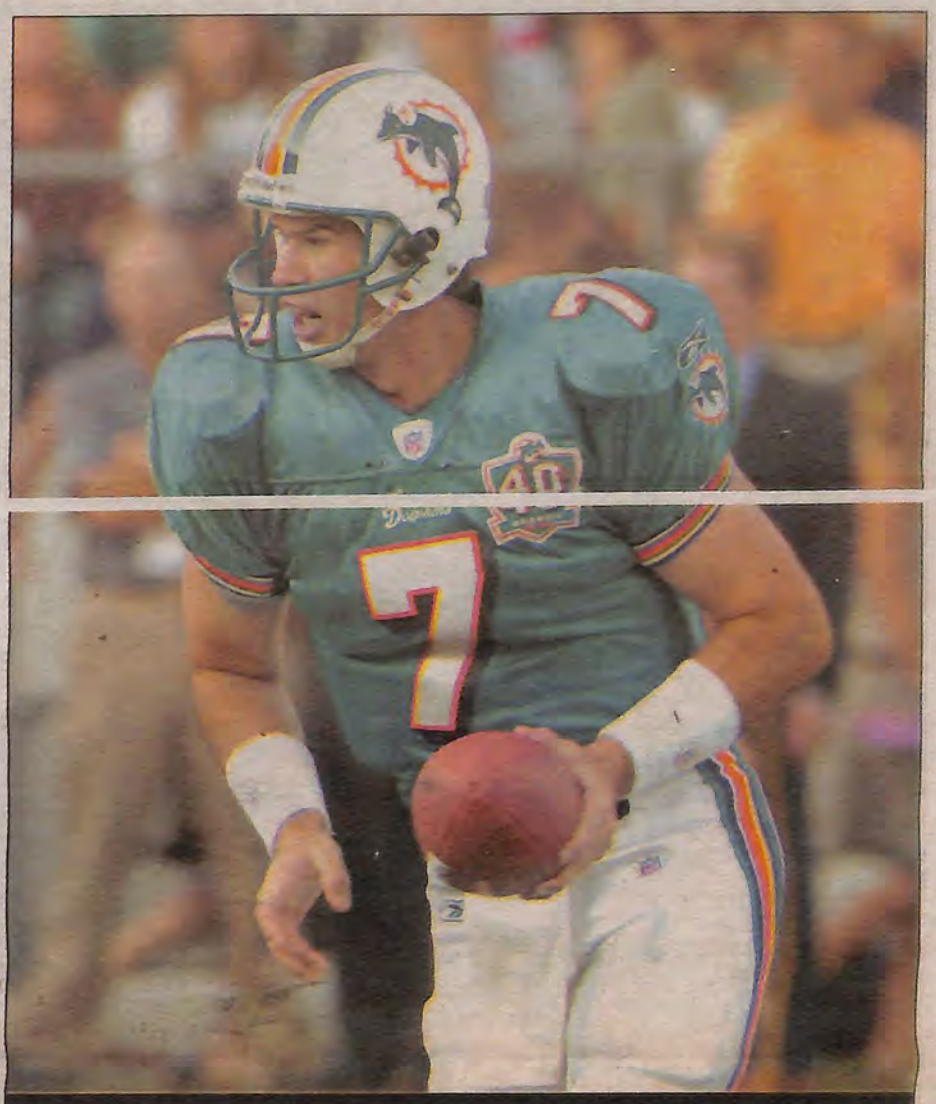
The Eagles probably tossed a take-it-or-leave-it No. 2 pick at Spielman, hoping that he might counter with a No. 3 or a No. 4, and instead Spielman bit and bit hard. You can be sure the Eagles were chuckling when the deal was consummated. Put simply, this was an inexperienced general manager in a pressure situation making a bad decision for all the wrong reasons.

Talk all you want about Feeley being in a bad offensive system last season when the Dolphins coaching staff was in turmoil. Nobody can argue that. But when stability arrived this season in the form of offensive coordinator Scott Linehan, when the team gave Feeley every opportunity to win the job this summer, he fell flat on his face. He was awful and showed no signs of a player capable of being a long-term solution.

Once Feeley was demoted to third string at the end of camp, it was just a matter of time. Give Saban credit for feeling absolutely no loyalty to someone else's mistake. As soon as he found what he believed was an upgrade — San Diego third-string quarterback Cleo Lemon — he made the move.

The Dolphins quarterback situation clearly is still a work in progress. Gus Frerotte is a short-term solution. Two different coaching staffs have surmised that Sage Rosenfels is backup quality. Who knows what will become of Lemon.

But A.J. Feeley is now out of the equation. It's just a shame a mistake like this had to come at such a steep price.



The move to acquire A.J. Feeley for a second-round pick will go down as one of the worst in team history. *Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL*

Lemon an intriguing prospect

Cleo Lemon had a tremendous preseason for the Chargers. *Photo/DONALD MIRALLE/Getty Images*

Cleo Lemon hasn't had the chance to show off his athletic skills that much since leaving Arkansas State University following the 2000 football season. But he sure has demonstrated a lot of patience.

He's hoping that patience will be rewarded now that the Dolphins have decided to take a shot to find out whether he can develop into a productive NFL quarterback.

Lemon clearly wasn't going to get that opportunity in San Diego with not only Drew Brees in front of him, but also 2004 first-round pick Philip Rivers.

But the situation clearly is different in Miami, and it's one Lemon is planning on taking advantage of.

"I have all the confidence in the world that I can play quarterback in this league," Lemon said while he was doing just that with an impressive preseason performance with the Chargers. "I know in my heart and in my mind that I can get the job done."

During the preseason, Lemon completed 34 of 49 passes for 369 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions, totals that were good enough for a 111.7 QB rating.

Of course, once the season began Lemon took his place as San Diego's third quarterback. This actually was a step up from last year when Lemon was the Chargers' fourth quarterback, behind Brees, Rivers and veteran Doug Flutie.

But just the fact that San Diego kept four quarterbacks on their 53-man roster to make room for Lemon tells you what they thought of his potential.

In fact, profootballtalk.com suggested that some members of the Chargers organization were against the idea of giving him up.

Coach Nick Saban said the Dolphins had had their eye on Lemon for a while now, in part because of the scouting report he got from offensive line coach Hudson Houck, who saw Lemon up close and personal in San Diego.

Lemon's past certainly is an interesting one.

After starting for four years at Arkansas State, he went undrafted in 2001, partly because of a partially torn ACL.

Ironically, Lemon was part of the same draft class as the man he was traded for, A.J. Feeley, as well as Dolphins No. 2 quarterback Sage Rosenfels. Feeley was drafted in the fifth round by Philadelphia that year, while Rosenfels was picked in the fourth round by Washington.

Lemon sat out the 2001 season after undergoing surgery on his knee, then began a journey that would take him to the Baltimore practice squad, NFL Europe and arenafootball2 before he caught the attention of a few NFL teams in 2003.

One of those was the Dolphins, who wanted to work him out. But he signed with San Diego before that happened.

Now, more than two years later, the Dolphins have gotten their hands on him. All that remains to be determined is whether he can give his new team a shot in the arm at some point.

— Alain Poupart

DOING THE DIRTY WORK

Traylor quietly making BIG impact for the defense

By ALAIN POUPART
Associate Editor

Keith Traylor has described his role with the Dolphins as a "plug," a "gladiator" and also as a "grunt." Coach Nick Saban, for his part, has used the term "anchor."

So it was only natural to ask the big fella which one he liked best.

"I kind of like anchor because Coach said it," Traylor said with a smile. "No, it don't matter. Whatever you call it, I'm cool and I'm in touch with my role on the team. That's the key thing. No matter how you pronounce it or how you go about describing it, I'm that and I'm cool with it."

OK, then, we'll provide the description for Traylor. How about the "immovable object"? Or "the rock"? Or perhaps "the banger"?

But it's like Traylor says, it doesn't really matter what you call him. The bottom line is the guy does his job very, very well.

That job is simple: Line up in the middle of the defensive line and help the Dolphins stop the run. That involves taking on constant double teams and trying to occupy those blockers so others can make the tackle.

"It's just nothing but bang, bang, bang the whole time you're in there," is how defensive end Kevin Carter described Traylor's main responsibility. "I've played end and tackle, and I do a lot of both now and the closer you get down to that ball, the more activity they've got going on. I applaud him because he's a tough, strong, hard-working old dude. I mean, to still be banging like that after all these years and still do it so effectively, I think, is a huge milestone."

And here's how you know Traylor is doing his job effectively.

There are several reasons the Dolphins were so good against the run in the first four weeks of the regular season and you can start with Traylor's performance.

The Dolphins also wouldn't have had the success they've had with their goal-line run defense — 11 of the first 14 carries inside the 5-yard line resulted in no gain or a loss — if not for Traylor's work at the point of attack.

Because his job involves doing the dirty work to free up his teammates, the 14-year veteran isn't going to rack up big statistics when it comes to tackles. And since he isn't on the field in obvious passing situations, he's also not going to get a lot of sacks.

But Traylor's teammates quickly will tell you how valuable he has been in his first season with the team. And Traylor isn't necessarily looking for a lot of publicity anyway.

"The thrill I get out of it is satisfaction for myself," he said. "I know what I do, that's a hard job to do, not everybody can do it. I don't care about the media and all that. My thing is just going out and doing my job and I take pride in stopping the run. And I think that's one of the things that Nick and Coach (Bill) Belichick, that's what they like about me. I take pride in that position, and that's about it."

Keith Traylor's work in the middle of the defensive line was a big reason the Dolphins were able to neutralize Bills running back Willis McGahee.
Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL

At 6-2, 337 pounds, Traylor has the ideal size to do the job — plenty of bulk and a low center of gravity that gives him leverage.

But it takes more than strength and a willingness to mix it up to become a good nose tackle.

"It's just about being tough, mentally sound more than anything, to recognize blocks and look at tendencies, starts, leanings, stances and everything else and knowing what the down-and-distance is and knowing what the situation might call for from you as a nose tackle," Carter said. "That's what more of it involves and that's why his experience makes him so good."

Traylor has been a very good nose tackle for several years now, and the Dolphins were able to get their hands on him because Belichick decided to go younger at the position with 2004 first-round pick Vince Wilfork.

So Traylor was released after one season with New England, during which he added a third Super Bowl ring to go with the two he won with the Denver Broncos in the 1997 and 1998 seasons.

In Traylor, Saban had the perfect guy to play nose tackle in his defense.

"Keith has done a really nice job for us because we've always liked to have the big guy in the middle who is difficult to single-block," Saban said. "If they have to double-team him and he can hold the point, then it makes all the other players more effective. Keith has been a good player for a long time in this league and we're pleased with what he has been able to do for us in terms of his impact."

Traylor indeed has been a good player for several years after his career took a couple of interesting turns.

Believe it or not, Traylor actually played linebacker at Central State University in Oklahoma, and it's in that capacity that he was drafted by the Broncos in the third round of the 1991 draft.

See TRAYLOR, next page

ON THE NOSE

The Dolphins' starters when they've used a nose tackle in their base defense (1977-95, 2005)

Year(s)	Nose tackle	Run defense rank	Comment
1977-84	Bob Baumhower	6-16-2-15-14-24-13-22	Baumhower a five-time Pro Bowler
1985	Mike Charles	23	Charles led team with seven sacks
1986	Bob Baumhower	27	Not much help for Baumhower on D-line
1987-89	Brian Sochia	25-26-25	Sochia made Pro Bowl in 1988
1990	Shawn Lee	16	Dolphins seventh in total defense
1991	Klingbeil-Oglesby-Turner	27	No nose tackle started more than four games
1992-95	Chuck Klingbeil	6-14-6-12	Dolphins in 4-3 from 1993-95
2005	Keith Traylor	14*	Dolphins great in goal-line defense

-Through five games

TRAYLOR, from preceding page

Upon seeing the size of his new teammate, former Denver tight end Shannon Sharpe gave Traylor the nickname "Truck" as a rookie — and it has stuck to this day.

After starting five games in his first two seasons with the Broncos, Traylor was waived, begining a long journey toward NFL stability.

He was signed and released by the Raiders and Packers in 1993 before joining the Chiefs late in the season. But he was let go by Kansas City prior to the 1994 season and was out of football that year.

After playing in NFL Europe in the spring of 1995, he re-signed with the Chiefs, who changed his career by switching him to the defensive line.

After two seasons as a backup in Kansas City, Traylor re-signed with Denver, became a full-time starter and established himself as one of the best run defenders in the league.

It's been the type of career Traylor never envisioned when he was in college.

"I never would have thought it would turn out like this," he said. "I never thought I would have been a D-lineman or played this long, either. The Good Lord has blessed me and I'm thankful, so that's how I look at it."

After Denver released Traylor in the spring of 2001, he hooked up with the Bears and spent three seasons in Chicago before signing with New England in March of 2004.

Traylor has never made the Pro Bowl, but it must be pointed out that it's very rare for a pure nose tackle to be selected to the all-star game because of the lack of statistics.

TRAYLOR'S TRAVELS

Keith Traylor's many stops during his NFL career

1991 — Drafted by Denver

1993 — Waived by Denver
Signed with L.A. Raiders
Released by L.A. Raiders
Signed with Green Bay
Released by Green Bay

1994 — Signed with Kansas City
Released by Kansas City
Signed with Kansas City
Released by Kansas City

1995 — Signed with Kansas City

1997 — Signed with Denver

2001 — Released by Denver
Signed with Chicago

2004 — Signed with New England

2005 — Released by New England
Signed with Miami

The fact is Traylor has been a very good nose tackle for several years now, which makes it somewhat surprising he is playing for his fourth team in the last six years.

Traylor, however, isn't surprised.

"No. I'm not your smiley, kiss-up guy," he says. "So I take it and I go with the flow. If they don't want me, I know somebody will. I know I can play the game of football, so I don't worry about all that other bull."

So far, Traylor has been a terrific addition, and a case could be made that he was the Dolphins' most important acquisition of the offseason.

He might be 36 years old, but Traylor has shown he is still effective at what he does.

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KELLY

Dear Dolfans!

Hi, My name is Kelly and I am 21 years old. I was born and raised right here in sunny South Florida. I currently am a student studying to be a dental hygienist.

When I'm not in school I love to spend time with my family. I also love water sports, cooking, and I am a huge fan of country-line dancing.

Thank you for supporting our team and helping us cheer our way to victory. I can't wait to see you from the sidelines. Remember, when you say Miami, you're talking Super Bowl! Have a great season. Go Dolphins!

Cheers,
KELLY

Miami Dolphins Cheerleaders

Miami Dolphins

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Exp.	College
5	Donnie Jones	P	6-3	222	2	LSU
10	Olindo Mare	K	5-10	190	9	Syracuse
11	Gus Frerotte	QB	6-3	233	12	Tulsa
17	Cleo Lemon	QB	6-2	215	2	Arkansas State
18	Sage Rosenfels	QB	6-4	225	5	Iowa State
20	Kiwaukee Thomas	CB	5-11	192	6	Georgia Southern
21	Travis Daniels	CB	6-1	192	R	LSU
23	Ronnie Brown	RB	6-0	232	R	Auburn
25	Reggie Howard	CB	6-0	185	6	Memphis
26	Travares Tillman	S	6-1	205	5	Georgia Tech
28	Travis Minor	RB	5-10	203	5	Florida State
29	Sam Madison	CB	5-11	180	9	Louisville
30	Lance Schulters	S	6-2	202	8	Hofstra
31	Sammy Morris	RB	6-0	218	6	Texas Tech
34	Ricky Williams	RB	5-10	226	6	Texas
35	Eddie Jackson	CB	6-0	200	2	Arkansas
36	Darian Barnes	FB	6-2	240	4	Hampton
37	Yeremiah Bell	S	6-0	200	2	Eastern Kentucky
42	Norman LeJeune	S	6-0	210	1	LSU
50	Nick Rogers	LB	6-2	250	4	Georgia Tech
51	Jason Glenn	LB	6-0	231	5	Texas A&M
52	Channing Crowder	LB	6-2	245	R	Florida
54	Zach Thomas	LB	5-11	228	10	Texas Tech
55	Junior Seau	LB	6-3	248	16	USC
56	Derrick Pope	LB	6-0	232	2	Alabama
58	Eddie Moore	LB	6-1	235	3	Tennessee
59	Donnie Spragan	LB	6-3	242	5	Stanford
63	Alonzo Ephraim	C	6-4	312	3	Alabama
65	Joe Berger	G	6-5	305	R	Michigan Tech
66	Rex Hadnot	C/G	6-2	325	2	Houston
68	Seth McKinney	C/G	6-3	310	4	Texas A&M
72	Vernon Carey	T	6-5	335	2	Miami (Fla.)
73	Stockar McDougle	T	6-6	348	6	Oklahoma
75	Manuel Wright	DT	6-6	329	R	USC
77	Damion McIntosh	T	6-4	320	6	Kansas State
78	Jeno James	G	6-4	320	6	Auburn
79	Anthony Alabi	T	6-5	315	R	TCU
80	David Boston	WR	6-2	228	7	Ohio State
81	Randy McMichael	TE	6-3	255	4	Georgia
82	Bryan Gilmore	WR	6-0	193	5	Midwestern State
83	Wes Welker	WR/KR	5-9	185	2	Texas Tech
84	Chris Chambers	WR	5-11	210	5	Wisconsin
85	Will Heller	TE	6-6	265	3	Georgia Tech
86	Marty Booker	WR	6-0	210	7	Louisiana-Monroe
87	Lorenzo Diamond	TE	6-3	260	2	Auburn
90	Jeff Zgonina	DT	6-2	290	13	Purdue
91	Vonnie Holliday	DE	6-5	288	8	North Carolina
93	Kevin Carter	DE	6-6	305	11	Florida
94	Keith Traylor	DT	6-2	337	15	Central State (Okla.)
96	David Bowens	DE	6-3	265	6	Western Ilinois
97	John Denney	LS	6-5	270	R	BYU
98	Matt Roth	DE	6-4	272	R	Iowa
99	Jason Taylor	DE	6-6	255	9	Akron

DOLPHINS DEPTH CHART

		OFFENSE	
QB	11-Gus Frerotte	18-Sage Rosenfels	17-Cleo Lemon
HB	23-Ronnie Brown	34-Ricky Williams	28-Travis Minor
FB	31-Sammy Morris	36-Darian Barnes	
WR	86-Marty Booker	80-David Boston	
WR	84-Chris Chambers	83-Wes Welker	82-Bryan Gilmore
TE	81-Randy McMichael	87-Lorenzo Diamond	85-Will Heller
LT	77-Damion McIntosh	79-Anthony Alabi	
LG	78-Jeno James	65-Joe Berger	
C	68-Seth McKinney	63-Alonzo Ephraim	
RG	66-Rex Hadnot	65-Joe Berger	
RT	72-Vernon Carey	73-Stockar McDougle	
		DEFENSE	
LE	93-Kevin Carter	98-Matt Roth	
NT	94-Keith Traylor	90-Jeff Zgonina	
DT	91-Vonnie Holliday	90-Jeff Zgonina	75-Manuel Wright
OE	99-Jason Taylor	96-David Bowens	98-Matt Roth
WLB	52-Channing Crowder	51-Jason Glenn	58-Eddie Moore
MLB	54-Zach Thomas	56-Derrick Pope	
SLB	55-Junior Seau	59-Donnie Spragan	50-Nick Rogers
RCB	29-Sam Madison	35-Eddie Jackson	20-Kiwaukee Thomas
LCB	21-Travis Daniels	25-Reggie Howard	
FS	30-Lance Schulters	37-Yeremiah Bell	
SS	26-Travares Tillman	42-Norman LeJeune	
		SPECIALISTS	
P	5-Donnie Jones		
K	10-Olindo Mare		

Atlanta Falcons

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Exp	College
2	Todd Peterson	K	5-11	180	12	Georgia
7	Michael Vick	QB	6-0	215	5	Virginia Tech
8	Matt Schaub	QB	6-5	237	2	Virginia
9	Michael Koenen	P	5-11	195	R	Western Washington
12	Michael Jenkins	WR	6-4	217	2	Ohio State
14	Ty Detmer	QB	6-0	189	14	Brigham Young
20	Allen Rossum	CB	5-8	187	8	Notre Dame
21	DeAngelo Hall	CB	5-10	197	2	Virginia Tech
22	Leigh Torrence	CB	6-0	183	R	Stanford
24	Bryan Scott	S	6-1	219	3	Penn State
25	Kevin McCadam	S	6-1	219	4	Virginia Tech
26	Omare Lowe	S	6-1	195	4	Washington
28	Warrick Dunn	RB	5-9	180	9	Florida State
29	Keion Carpenter	S	5-11	205	7	Virginia Tech
30	Christian Morton	CB	6-0	180	2	Illinois
33	Justin Griffith	FB	5-11	232	3	Mississippi State
34	DeAndra Cobb	RB	5-10	196	R	Michigan State
36	Jason Webster	CB	5-9	187	6	Texas A&M
38	Ronnie Heard	S	6-3	215	6	Mississippi
39	Cam Newton	S	6-1	203	R	Furman
44	Fred McCrary	FB	6-0	247	11	Mississippi State
45	T.J. Duckett	RB	6-0	254	4	Michigan State
48	Derek Rackley	LS	6-4	250	6	Minnesota
51	Demorrio Williams	LB	6-0	232	2	Nebraska
53	John Leake	LB	6-0	241	1	Clemson
54	Antoine Cash	LB	6-1	223	R	Southern Miss
56	Keith Brooking	LB	6-2	245	8	Georgia Tech
59	Michael Boley	LB	6-3	236	R	Southern Miss
61	Matt Lehr	G	6-2	304	5	Virginia Tech
62	Todd McClure	C	6-1	286	6	LSU
65	Kynan Forney	G	6-3	307	5	Hawaii
66	Austin King	C	6-5	303	3	Northwestern
69	Ben Claxton	G	6-2	301	1	Mississippi
70	Frank Omiyale	T	6-4	310	R	Tennessee Tech
71	Darrell Shropshire	DT	6-2	301	R	South Carolina
74	Todd Weiner	T	6-4	297	8	Kansas State
75	Rod Coleman	DT	6-2	285	7	East Carolina
76	Kevin Shaffer	T	6-5	290	4	Tulsa
79	Barry Stokes	T	6-4	310	8	Eastern Michigan
80	Eric Beverly	TE	6-3	300	9	Miami (Ohio)
82	Jerome Pathon	WR	6-0	182	8	Washington
83	Alge Crumpler	TE	6-2	262	5	North Carolina
84	Roddy White	WR	6-0	208	R	UAB
85	Dwayne Blakley	TE	6-4	257	2	Missouri
86	Brian Finneran	WR	6-5	210	7	Villanova
89	Dez White	WR	6-1	215	6	Georgia Tech
91	Brady Smith	DE	6-5	274	10	Colorado State
92	Chauncey Davis	DE	6-2	272	R	Florida State
94	Chad Lavalais	DT	6-1	293	2	LSU
95	Jonathan Babineaux	DT	6-2	286	R	Iowa
96	Antwan Lake	DT	6-4	308	4	West Virginia
97	Patrick Kerney	DE	6-5	273	7	Virginia
98	Ike Reese	LB	6-2	222	8	Michigan State

FALCONS DEPTH CHART

		OFFENSE	
QB	7-Michael Vick	8-Matt Schaub	14-Ty Detmer
RB	28-Warrick Dunn	45-T.J. Duckett	34-DeAndra Cobb
FB	33-Justin Griffith	44-Fred McCrary	
WR	86-Brian Finneran	82-Jerome Pathon	89-Dez White
WR	12-Michael Jenkins	84-Roddy White	
TE	83-Alge Crumpler	80-Eric Beverly	85-Dwayne Blakley
LT	76-Kevin Shaffer	70-Frank Omiyale	
LG	61-Matt Lehr	69-Ben Claxton	
C	62-Todd McClure	66-Austin King	
RG	65-Kynan Forney	69-Ben Claxton	
RT	74-Todd Weiner	79-Barry Stokes	
		DEFENSE	
LE	97-Patrick Kerney	92-Chauncey Davis	
NT	94-Chad Lavalais	96-Antwan Lake	71-Darrell Shropshire
UT	75-Rod Coleman	95-Jonathan Babineaux	
RE	91-Brady Smith	92-Chauncey Davis	
SLB	59-Michael Boley	98-Ike Reese	
MLB	56-Keith Brooking	54-Antoine Cash	53-John Leake
WLB	51-Demorrio Williams	98-Ike Reese	
LCB	21-DeAngelo Hall	20-Allen Rossum	
SS	29-Keion Carpenter	38-Ronnie Heard	39-Cam Newton
FS	24-Bryan Scott	25-Kevin McCadam	26-Omare Lowe
RCB	36-Jason Webster	30-Christian Morton	22-Leigh Torrence
		SPECIALISTS	
P	9-Michael Koenen		
K	2-Todd Peterson		

Countdown to Kickoff

MIAMI DOLPHINS vs. ATLANTA FALCONS

GAME FACTS

- DATE ..... Nov. 6, 2005
- TIME ..... 1 p.m.
- SITE ..... Dolphins Stadium
- TELEVISION ..... FOX

THE SERIES

The Dolphins have dominated this series, which has featured his share of close games. Miami is 7-2 against Atlanta, and six of the last seven meetings were decided by seven points or less. The Dolphins are 5-1 at home against the Falcons.

LAST MEETING

The Dolphins put together two goal-line stands, the second in the last minute of the game, to hold off the Falcons, 21-14, at Pro Player Stadium Dec. 30, 2001. The Dolphins led 21-7 at halftime thanks to a 26-yard interception return for a touchdown by Brock Marion and TD passes from Jay Fiedler to Travis Minor and Oronde Gadsden before Atlanta rallied behind rookie quarterback Michael Vick. Coming in for injured starter Chris Chandler, Vick passed for 214 yards and a touchdown. Atlanta outgained the Dolphins 386-226.

CONNECTIONS

Dolphins veteran Jeff Zgonina's long NFL career included a stop in Atlanta (1996). Special teams coach Keith Armstrong was an assistant with the Falcons from 1994-96. Falcons cornerback Omare Lowe was a fifth-round pick of the Dolphins in 2002.

SERIES SNAPSHOT

BIG DAY FOR BROCK — Safety Brock Marion celebrates his 26-yard interception return for a touchdown, which got the Dolphins on the scoreboard in their 21-14 victory over the Falcons Dec. 30, 2001. The victory gave the Dolphins a 10-5 record on the season and clinched their fifth consecutive playoff berth. The Dolphins would go on to beat Buffalo the following week to finish 11-5, but their Super Bowl dreams ended with a 20-3 home loss to the Baltimore Ravens in the wild-card round of the playoffs.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

- **QB Michael Vick** — So Vick isn't a terribly accurate passer. His mere presence changes the way defenses have to play the Falcons and he has a terrific won-loss record to back him up.
- **RB Warrick Dunn** — A star on and off the field, the 2004 Walter Payton Man of the Year Award winner is well on his way to his fourth career 1,000-yard season. He already has 732 yards rushing.
- **DT Rod Coleman** — Signed as an unrestricted free agent in 2004, Coleman has been worth every penny for the Falcons. After recording 11.5 sacks last season, he already has seven in 2005.
- **CB DeAngelo Hall** — The eighth overall pick of the 2004 draft, Hall's progress was delayed by a hip injury last year. But he's been terrific this season, with four interceptions and a fumble return for a touchdown already on his resume.

STAT OF THE WEEK

DIFFICULT DOUBLE

Atlanta is on its way to back-to-back winning records for the first time in franchise history. Here's how the Falcons followed their previous winning seasons

Season	Record	Next year
1971	7-6-1	7-7
1973	9-5	3-11
1978	9-7	6-10
1980	12-4	7-9
1991	10-6	6-10
1995	9-7	3-13
1998	14-2	5-11
2002	9-6-1	5-11
2004	11-5	5-2

WHEN THE DOLPHINS HAVE THE BALL

The Atlanta defense hasn't been nearly as good as it was last season, and this despite the addition of free agent linebacker Edgerton Hartwell, who's now out with an injury. The Falcons have been susceptible against the run, in part because starting linebacker Demorrio Williams' lack of size has been exposed. The Falcons secondary also is suspect, even though second-year cornerback DeAngelo Hall is a star in the making. The strength of the Atlanta defense clearly is up front, where both Rod Coleman and Patrick Kerney are big-time pass rushers. Given Atlanta's problems stopping the run, it would make sense for the Dolphins to get Ronnie Brown and Ricky Williams a lot of carries.

WHEN THE FALCONS HAVE THE BALL

There's no great secret to stopping the Falcons offense, and it's all about stopping the run. That means containing the running back tandem of Warrick Dunn and T.J. Duckett and keeping Michael Vick from scrambling outside. The teams that have had success against Vick have made sure to keep him in the pocket. That's because Vick, who has perhaps the strongest arm in the league, seldom will beat teams with his passing. When Vick does throw, his favorite target easily is tight end Alge Crumpler, who is big and can get downfield. Atlanta has two first-round picks at wide receiver (Michael Jenkins, Roddy White), but the guy to watch there is Brian Finneran.

Last Week

The Falcons enjoyed their bye, which came after a 27-14 Monday night victory over the New York Jets. The victory gave Atlanta a 5-2 record, the same mark the Falcons had at this point last year on their way to an 11-5 finish and NFC South title. Atlanta will come to Dolphins Stadium with a 2-1 road record, with victories at Buffalo and San Antonio (against the Saints) along with a loss at Seattle.

THE COACHES

NICK SABAN

Nick Saban, who joined the Dolphins after compiling a 43-14 record during his five-year tenure at LSU (2000-04), co-authored two books during his five-year stay at LSU, "Tiger Turnaround" and "How Good Do You Want To Be."

JIM MORA

The son of the former Saints head coach of the same name, Mora last year matched the best rookie season for a coach taking over a team coming off a losing record. Mora took over in Atlanta after four seasons as San Francisco's defensive coordinator.

Last Word

"The way I define our team is that we play well as a team. ... Guys step up and make plays.

— ATLANTA HEAD COACH JIM MORA

Hurricane makes for unique week

The Dolphins were trying to make the best of a bad situation last week in the aftermath of Hurricane Wilma, but they weren't about to complain — not when the upcoming opponent were the New Orleans Saints, who have had to deal with much worse because of Hurricane Katrina.

Still, it definitely was a different week at Dolphins camp.

Most of the players came to work from homes that, like a good portion of South Florida, were without power. The Dolphins' training facility was operating thanks to a generator, but a malfunction left the players having to take cold showers after the Thursday practice.

Otherwise, it was business as usual for the Dolphins — when they were at the training facility.

"That's what we've got to deal with after we leave here," tackle Damion McIntosh said of the effects of the hurricane. "While we're here, concentrate on what we've go to do as far as preparation and things like that. That's what we did. There wasn't a lot of talk about what happened. 'Everybody OK? Yeah, OK, all right, let's keep going.' And when you get home, deal with your situation."

By all accounts, no Dolphins player had his home severely damaged by the hurricane.

"I never really respected hurricanes like I did tornadoes back home in Texas, but now I have respect for it. And that's just for a (Category) 3; I mean, next time if it's a 4 or 5 I'm out of here."

— LB ZACH THOMAS

But it was a scary experience for a lot of them, among them linebacker Jason Glenn.

A native of Texas, Glenn was no stranger to hurricanes — his home was damaged by Hurricane Rita — and even tornadoes. But he said he never experienced anything like Wilma.

"That was horrible," said Glenn, who revealed he spent more than three hours in his bathroom with a blanket and his daughter's yorkie.

Fellow Texan Zach Thomas, for his part, said he gained a whole new respect for the power of hurricanes.

"It was impressive," Thomas said. "I never really respected hurricanes like I did tornadoes back home in Texas, but now I have respect for it. And that's just for a (Category) 3; I mean, next time if it's a 4 or 5 I'm out of here. I've got a lot of respect for it. It was really nerve-racking."

The hurricane also made the Dolphins adjust their schedule, beginning with the move of the Kansas City game from Oct. 23 to Friday night, Oct. 21.

With Wilma making landfall on Monday, Coach Nick Saban gave his players that day off and instead had them come in on Tuesday — normally the players' day off.

"I tried to escape (Monday) before the wind started blowing so I could be here where we had a generator and watch film and work during the storm, but (wife) Terry, very politely said, 'If you leave the house now I am calling the cops and telling them to arrest you.' " Saban said. "That was basically the end of that theory, but I did have my laptop with me."

Saban also indicated that to get to work on Tuesday he had to use a handsaw to remove a tree that had fallen on his front gate.

Gus Frerotte, meanwhile, told the story of his next-door neighbor who fell and hit the back of his head on the ground while putting up shutters — the neighbor was hospitalized but is fine.

The hurricane presented a different type of problem for guard Rex Hadnot, whose fiancee is pregnant.

"She's from Ohio, this all new stuff for her," he said. "I had to answer a lot of questions I didn't know the answer to."

The bottom line is the Dolphins spent the week preparing for a game as if nothing had happened.

"You can only control what you can control," said tight end Randy McMichael. "You can control how you prepare and play, and that's what we'll focus on.

"As long as another hurricane doesn't come by, we should be fine."

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Sept. 11	Denver Broncos	1:00PM
Sept. 18	at New York Jets	4:15PM
Sept. 25	Carolina Panthers	1:00PM
Oct. 02	BYE	
Oct. 09	at Buffalo Bills	1:00PM
Oct. 16	at Tampa Bay Buccaneers	1:00PM
Oct. 23	Kansas City Chiefs*	1:00PM
Oct. 30	at New Orleans Saints	1:00PM
Nov. 06	Atlanta Falcons*	1:00PM
Nov. 13	New England Patriots*	1:00PM
Nov. 20	at Cleveland Browns	1:00PM
Nov. 27	at Oakland Raiders	4:05PM
Dec. 04	Buffalo Bills	1:00PM
Dec. 11	at San Diego Chargers	4:15PM
Dec. 18	New York Jets*	1:00PM
Dec. 24	Tennessee Titans	1:00PM
Jan. 01, 2006	at New England Patriots	1:00PM

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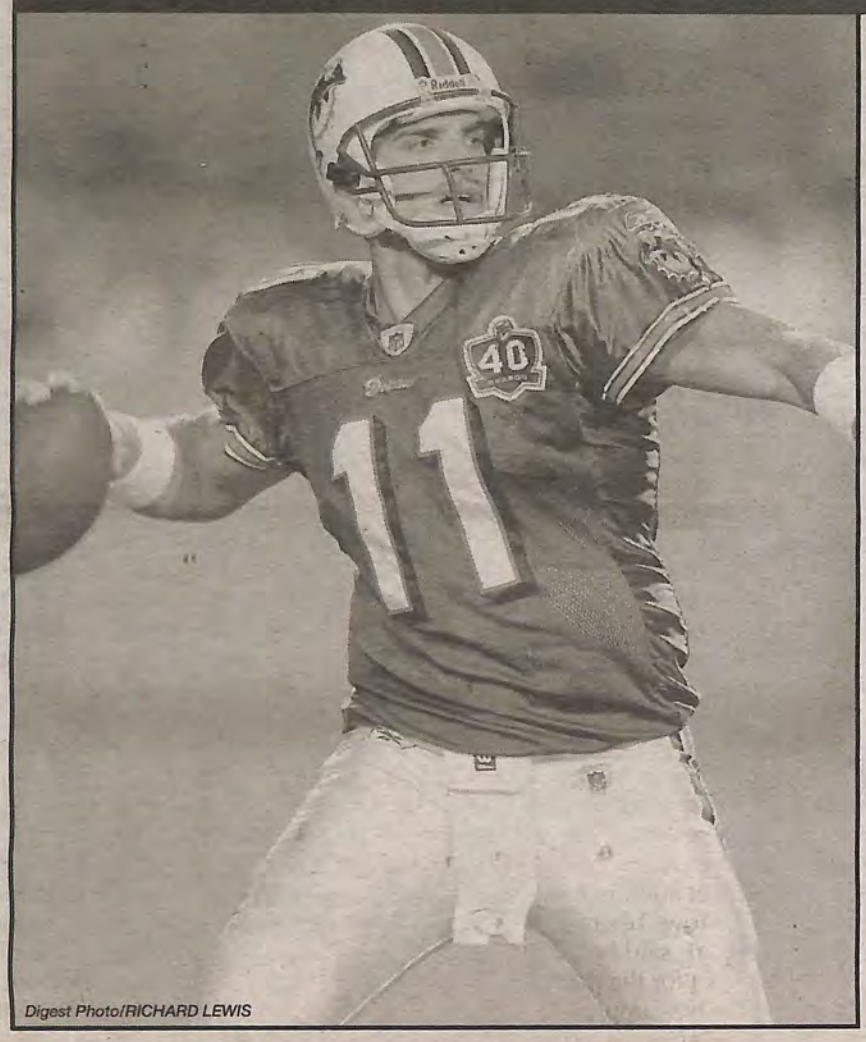
off THE field

Gus Frerotte


Digest Photo/RICHARD LEWIS

Full name: Gustave Joseph Frerotte
Date of Birth: July 31, 1971
Place of Birth: Kittanning, Pa.
Ht: 6-3 **Wt:** 233
College: Tulsa
Marital Status: Married (Ann) with one daughter (Abigaile) and two sons (Gunnar and Gabriel)

What is the best thing about being an NFL player?: Playing on Sundays. To be able to go out and play with your teammates and have a lot of fun. You have good times and bad times, but just going out on Sundays and playing the game you love when you are 34 years old, and playing since you were a kid, is the best thing about being in the NFL.

What is the worst thing about being an NFL player?: Probably Monday morning when you wake up and you are sore from the game the day before. Especially as a quarterback, it is harder to protect yourself. You're going to be sore, that's just part of it. Taking the hits, though, is probably the worst thing.

How would you describe the perfect vacation?: It is taking your grandparents with you so they can watch the kids so you and your wife can just lay around and do nothing and enjoy it for a week. It doesn't matter where we are. It could be in the mountains or on the beach — as long as you get some time with your spouse and really enjoy some quiet time.

If you were hosting a party, what three celebrities would you invite?: Jim Caviezel. Besides Jim, I don't know who I would invite. I've met a lot of people in my life. I've met Jim before and I just love his acting ability. He's just a great person. He's not one of those actors that is caught up in themselves. He's related to Coach (Scott) Linehan and he's been to some of my games when I was in Minnesota. Just seeing him in "The Passion of the Christ" and how much he really cared about making that film just set him apart. I know what kind of ethics and morals he has and he is a great person.

What is your favorite hobby?: I collect old baseball cards. I haven't found a place to do that down here yet, and I have been looking. Usually every city I go to I find an old hobby shop that I go to and try to trade or barter for some old cards that I don't have. I have some cards from the 1940s and 1950s. My best cards are a rookie Roberto Clemente and a 1956 Mickey Mantle.

What is the craziest thing you have ever done?: One time in college, me and a bunch of my friends were out in a boat and we climb up this hill, which was about 100 feet. We then all jumped off this 100-foot cliff. Just thinking back, when I was standing up there it didn't look that far when we were in the boat. When you actually jump, you realize it's a long way down. You feel like you're flying through the air. When I hit the water, I can remember my feet just pounding because it hurt so bad when I hit the water.

What is your favorite material possession?: I would have to say either my Roberto Clemente rookie card, my bubble hockey machine or my Ford F-350. Any one of those.

Who would be the best actor to play you in a movie?: It's funny, I was watching the "Fantastic Four" with Kevin Carter and he swears that Mr. Fantastic (Ioan Gruffudd) looks just like me or I look just like him because he has a little bit of the gray hair. Maybe that would be the perfect actor to play me.

What is one thing fans would be surprised to know about you?: I guess that I am just an average family guy. I think that is it. My kids are older now, they are 10, 7 and 6, and I go to their football practices and stuff like that. I do normal things like go to the grocery store and take the dog to the vet. I'm just a dad. Football is my job and I love it, but I also love my family and any time I have free I spend it with them.

How do you like to unwind after the game?: It usually depends who's in town. Usually I'll just have dinner with my family. We'll go to some restaurant, relax and I'll talk to my wife about what happened in the game. She usually has pretty good stories for me about what the kids did during the game. Sometimes they are pretty wild during the game.

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Team needs picks, picks, picks

The trade deadline passed relatively quietly a couple of weeks ago. Miami unloaded one of Rick Spielman's mistakes for an obscure quarterback who possesses some talent from San Diego.

A second-round pick to Philadelphia for A.J. Feeley was the second-worst trade in franchise history. The worst was when Jake Scott, a Super Bowl MVP safety, was sent along with a fourth-round draft choice to Washington for another safety named Bryant Salter.

Scott continued to play at a Pro Bowl level for a few more seasons. He was moved because Don Shula had some issues with him.

Salter never played well and was distinguished only by his live-in girlfriend being busted for bookmaking.

One never knows. A guy named Lemon could someday turn out to be sweet. He has the same pedigree as Kurt Warner — undrafted, Europe and the Arena League.

The feeling here is that Tuesday was a day of missed opportunity.

There are desirable commodities on the roster. But one who would be expendable, and in one particular instance needed, is Ricky Williams.

This theory has nothing to do with his past. It also is not a negative toward the two-back offense or Ricky's six carries for minus-1 yard on Friday night.

It does have a lot to do with Ronnie Brown, who appears to be the real deal.

It also has everything to do with where the Dolphins are, and how another team's need can yield part of the answer.

Philadelphia represents the immediate need. The Eagles have no running game. In their losses, the single-dimensional factor has been costly. Ricky would be a great fit there, a back who would command respect from defenses. A difference-maker for a contender.

The Fins might even have been able to get that second-round pick back for the future.

One of the rare positions on the roster where the Dolphins don't have a need is running back, and that's why trading Ricky Williams for a draft pick would have made a lot of sense. *Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL*

And that's what they need. Draft picks.

It should be apparent by now that Nick Saban has inherited a team that is not an immediate playoff possibility. Further, it has numerous gaps in talent.

And while there will be significant cap money available next year, the draft is the reservoir for growth.

An examination of the current roster reveals a shocking amount of need.

1) The offensive line: One could make the case that they are five cards short of a full house. They definitely need tackle. Just to be on the conservative side, let's say three.

2) Quarterback: Gus Frerotte does not represent the future. Never did. Why not try Sage? Hopefully, the San Diego deal is just the first step in the quarterback exchange.

3) Wide receiver: Definitely need one prime target, a 6-5 package of speed, hands and route-running precision.

4) The secondary: The two best defensive backs on the field in the Kansas City game were former Dolphins. In order to fulfill the requirements for nickel and dime packages, they should be on the lookout for, at least, four players.

5) Front seven: While this is the team's strength, it will probably be Junior Seau's last year. Zach Thomas is at the top of his game, but will he be when the offense arrives?

So we'll go for two linebackers and a lineman. It adds up to 12. And that's without role players.

Yes, incoming free agents will be a part of that.

Saban would be the first to state that he is going to need draft choices in quantity, something that was in short supply from the Dave Wannstedt-Spielman era.

The trading deadline and Philadelphia was a chance to get the ball rolling. And we don't know if the Fins reached out or not.

With GM Randy Mueller on board, there is an upgrade in the eye-for-talent category.

Another high pick would be nice.

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Dear Overview:

It was so refreshing to see the Dolphins play so well against the Saints. Ricky and Ronnie were terrific and the defense just kept coming. I'm so happy for Nick Saban, that he was able to go back to LSU and come away with a victory.

Now things get real tough for the Dolphins, playing Atlanta and New England. But at least things look better now. Keep on working, guys. In Nick we trust!

Marc Lancaster
Coral Gables, Fla.

* * *

Dear Overview:

Living on the west coast of Florida, the last week after Wilma hit has been a nightmare and I can certainly feel for the problems experienced by the Miami Dolphins during this difficult time.

Please make Nick Saban, his players and the entire Dolphins organization aware that their loyal fans will remain supportive through the good and the bad and we realize there is more to life than just football.

Despite some of the recent setbacks, I still strongly believe the Dolphins are heading in the right direction under Saban and before too long we'll be talking playoff games.

Rhona Shroeder
Naples, Fla.

* * *

Dear Overview:

During the first half of the Chiefs game, I told my wife Cindy that our tandem of Ronnie and Ricky needed a nickname a la Butch Cassidy and Sundance. At that time, I coined the Rock and Roll Backfield. Ronnie the Rock, Ricky the Roll.

Dolphins Trivia

In each issue of Dolphin Digest, we will test your Dolphins knowledge with one trivia question. This is only for the most diehard of fans. See how well you do. The answer will appear in this space in the next issue of Dolphin Digest.

Question: When the Dolphins played the Chiefs on Oct. 21, a switch due to the threat of Hurricane Wilma, it marked only the second time the Dolphins ever played a Friday night regular season game. Can you name the other?

Answer to the question in the last issue: The last time the Dolphins had *two backs go over the 100-yard mark in* the same game was Oct. 5, 1975 with Mercury Morris (125 yards) and Don Nottingham (102) when the Dolphins defeated the Packers in Green Bay, 31-7.

Second half starts and the Rock runs 65 yards for a score. Rock and Roll! Stay tuned, this is just the beginning.

Steve Kanelos
Charlotte, N.C.

* * *

Dear Overview:

Let's face it, the defensive secondary stinks, the offensive line stinks and Gus Frerotte stinks. As the old Brooklyn Dodgers used to say, "Wait till next year." In the meantime. give the ball to Sage Rosenfels, at least he should be able to hit a 6-foot-2 wide-open tight end without bouncing it at his feet.

Robert W. DePuy
Cape Coral, Fla.

* * *

Dear Overview:

I just finished watching the Chiefs game, and my first observation is that it is painfully clear that as far as a starting quarterback goes, we are no further ahead of ourselves than we were at this time last year. Number 11 unquestionably has the ability to get the ball downfield; however, to the educated football fan it is quite obvious that his challenges are with his lack of overall accuracy.

It would be my humble opinion that Number 18 has earned a chance to become the starting quarterback of our beloved Dolphins.

My second observation is that at least the Dolphins showed much more poise and discipline than any of the previous games this season.

Eric Watson
Naples, Fla.

* * *

Dear Overview:

I couldn't be happier that A.J. Feeley was shipped off to San Diego. The guy just never showed me anything. I'm waiting to hear him complain that he didn't get a fair shot in Miami. Two coaching staffs gave him a chance to play and he did very little to prove his worth.

I'll never understand why the Dolphins made the deal to begin with, but at least Nick Saban had the guts to send him packing. The Chargers can gladly have him.

Mark Shapiro
Bronx, N.Y.

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DOLPHIN DATA

Fullback Evans gets released

In a move that came as a surprise to many, the Dolphins waived veteran fullback **Heath Evans** last week.

Evans started only two of the first six games of the season because the Dolphins often lined up with two tight ends and because **Ronnie Brown** and **Ricky Williams** were together in the backfield to start the Tampa Bay game.

Evans had been signed as a free agent from Seattle in the offseason, three days after the contract of former starter **Rob Konrad** was terminated.

"This was kind of a two-fold deal," said Coach **Nick Saban.** "I think we wanted to redefine what we wanted at that position, in terms of a physical, blocking type of guy, but also I think we have had some issues from a roster standpoint as to who we can keep active and who we can't.

"Heath did a pretty good job, but now that we are playing more multiples of things, his role diminished and it made it a little more difficult to keep a roster spot for a third tight end as well as a fullback, although we will have to have somebody fill both of those voids."

NO MORE JONES: The loss to Kansas City proved very costly for the Dolphins, who saw starting strong safety **Tebucky Jones** go down with a season-ending chest injury. Jones was placed on injured reserve last week after undergoing surgery to repair a torn pectoral muscle. At the time of the injury, Jones was fifth on the team with 35 tackles, including two sacks.

NEW FACES: To replace Jones on the roster, the Dolphins signed safety **Norman LeJeune,** who played for Saban at LSU. LeJeune was a seventh-round pick of the Eagles in 2003. Also signed last week was fullback **Darian Barnes,** a fourth-year veteran from Hampton.

NEW LINEBACKER: The Dolphins bolstered their linebacker corps before the Kansas City game by signing three-year veteran **Nick Rogers,** a former defensive end at Georgia Tech. In three seasons, Rogers had two sacks and four forced fumbles in 43 games, 16 of them starts. Rogers played two seasons with Minnesota after being a sixth-round pick in 2002 and then split time between Green Bay and Indianapolis last season. He was waived by the Colts this year in the first wave of roster cuts.

SHORT STAY: Rogers' signing filled a roster opening that was created when the team released wide receiver **Cliff Russell,** who had been signed a week earlier.

CAREY CAROUSEL: Former first-round pick **Vernon Carey** was back in the starting lineup against Kansas City, replacing veteran **Stockar McDougle.** McDougle had played all but one series against Tampa Bay, but was benched after committing three penalties — two for false starts and one for holding. Carey did not commit a penalty against Kansas City.

PENALTY ADJUSTMENT: McDougle initially was "credited" with five penalties against Tampa Bay, but two of those were changed. A false start was assessed to guard **Jeno James,** while a holding call was changed from McDougle to **Seth McKinney.**

PRACTICE SQUAD: Because of **Olindo Mare's** minor knee injury, the Dolphins signed kicker **Jeff Chandler** to the practice squad as insurance. Also signed to the practice squad was NT **Tim McGill,** who spent the first three games on the active roster, and WR **Chris Davis.** They joined a group that already included WR **Maurice Mann,** RB **Kay-Jay Harris,** S **Jack Hunt,** WR **Fred Gibson** and T **Orrin Thompson.**

SHIRDONYA SIGHTING: Cornerback ***Shirdonya Mitchell,*** *a rookie* free agent who tore an ACL at his Pro Day in the spring and has been on PUP all season, began practicing last week. The Dolphins have a three-week window during which they need to decide whether to activate him or sideline him for the season.

Brown shows off big-play ability

There weren't a lot of highlights for the Dolphins in the 30-20 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs on Oct. 21, but Ronnie Brown's spectacular 65-yard touchdown run early in the third quarter definitely was a play worth remembering.

Brown scored when he lowered his head, bounced off safety Greg Wesley, bounced to the sidelined, avoided the tackle of former Dolphins safety Sammy Knight and sprinted to the end zone.

It was the second-longest run by a rookie in Dolphins history, topped only by Leroy Harris' 77-yard effort in 1977.

Brown was asked whether the 65-yard run was an indication of the real Ronnie Brown.

"I think we have been seeing the real Ronnie Brown," he said. "You get an opportunity and sometimes you take advantage of it."

Injury Update ...

The Dolphins were a pretty banged-up team when they traveled to face the Saints, but they appeared to get out of the game without further damage.

The only injury reported immediately after the game was a chin laceration sustained by center **Seth McKinney,** who had a bloody jersey but was able to continue playing.

The Dolphins did face the Saints without starters **Sam Madison** (hip) and **Junior Seau** (calf), but several players were able to line up despite appearing on the injury report during the week.

That group included WR **Marty Booker** (ankle), DE **Kevin Carter** (knee), K **Olindo Mare** (knee), S **Lance Schulters** (quad) and DE **Jason Taylor** (foot). All of them, along with Seau and Madison, were listed as questionable throughout the week.

Seau went to get a second opinion on his calf, and it didn't produce anything different than originally diagnosed. He has been bothered by the injury for several weeks but could be back at any time.

In addition to Seau and Madison, the inactives against New Orleans were FB **Darian Barnes,** LB **Eddie Moore,** G **Joe Berger,** DT **Manuel Wright** and T **Anthony Alabi.**

Newly acquired **Cleo Lemon** served as the third quarterback.

A SALUTE TO DOLPHINS HISTORY — Two Dolphins fans check out Dan Marino's Hall of Fame bust before the Kansas City game as the Dolphins provided a sneak preview of a huge exhibit honoring the team's 40-year anniversary. Also featured at the exhibit, located on the club level at Dolphins Stadium, is a photographic look at the franchise decade-by-decade, a re-creation of Don Shula's desk and, of course, the busts of the team's nine Hall of Famers. But there is so much more than that. The Hall of Fame exhibit will be open to the public from Wednesday through Saturday (see page 2). *Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL*

WIZARD OF GRID

Of course, I had every winner last week and picked each score exactly correct. Like any good handicapper, I take advantage of every edge. And Hurricane Wilma gave me the edge to be perfect against the line; because nobody would see the Dolphin Digest *that was not printed. If you sent me a double sawbuck, I'll send you the article I wrote for last week's paper. Now, I'm just like the rest of those touts who a week later tell you about all the winners they picked. Seriously, I'm about 50 percent for the season against the opening lines and hope to do better, starting this week. Sort of like the Dolphins!*

The Texans finally won a game last week so the Colts are the only team in the NFL with an "0" in their record. After a bye last week, the Colts march toward an unbeaten season. Of course, the world champion Patriots stand in the way next Monday night and I would not bet against Bill Belichick getting it done one more time against Peyton & Co. And even if the Patriots don't beat the Colts, I'll give 10-1 they don't finish the regular season at 16-0.

Here are my top selections against the opening line for week No. 9 of the NFL season:

★★★★ Oakland (3-4) at Kansas City (4-3) — These two division rivals get together one more time in an important game. The Chiefs have been on the road for the last two weeks and will welcome playing against a bad defensive team like the Raiders. The Raiders beat a poor Tennessee team last Sunday but will be no match for the Chiefs here. K.C. is better on both sides of the football and beating the point spread should not be a problem in this high-scoring affair. Lay the points with confidence and you will double your money. **Kansas City, 34-13.**

★★ Houston (1-6) at Jacksonville (4-3) — The only thing the Texans' win last week did was to make this game a better proposition. Also, Jacksonville lost in St. Louis, which gives more incentive for a win here. The oddsmakers have done you a favor by keeping the line down because this game will not be close. The Jaguars will win and cover the number easily and you would be wise to listen to my advice. **Jacksonville, 28-10.**

★★ Chicago (4-3) at New Orleans (2-6) — The Saints were so bad last week against the Dolphins that it is not possible they could play as poorly again. The Bears won in Detroit and stand alone on top in the NFC North. The Bears are not good enough for that lofty status and in this Parity League that spells trouble. **New Orleans, 21-17.**

Atlanta (5-2) at Miami (3-4) — The Dolphins played outstanding defense last week in New Orleans and will keep Michael Vick in check. This will be a very close game with the field goal kickers deciding the outcome. I like Olindo Mare over Todd Peterson and the Fish over the Falcs. **Miami, 20-17.**

PRO FOOTBALL — OPENING LINE

Sun. Nov. 6 ★ Week 9

CINCINNATI BENGALS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM BALTIMORE RAVENS CBS	5			
TENNESSEE TITANS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM CLEVELAND BROWNS CBS	3			
HOUSTON TEXANS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS CBS	11			
OAKLAND RAIDERS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM KANSAS CITY CHIEFS CBS	4			
ATLANTA FALCONS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM MIAMI DOLPHINS FOX	2.5			
DETROIT LIONS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM MINNESOTA VIKINGS FOX	OFF			
CHICAGO BEARS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM NEW ORLEANS SAINTS FOX	3			
SAN DIEGO CHARGERS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM NEW YORK JETS CBS	6.5			
CAROLINA PANTHERS P-10:00 AM C-12:00 PM E-1:00 PM TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS FOX	1			
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS P-1:05 PM C-3:05 PM E-4:05 PM ARIZONA CARDINALS FOX	5.5			
NEW YORK GIANTS P-1:05 PM C-3:05 PM E-4:05 PM SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS FOX	8			
PITTSBURGH STEELERS P-1:15 PM C-3:15 PM E-4:15 PM GREEN BAY PACKERS CBS	7			
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES P5:30 PM C-7:30 PM E-8:30 PM WASHINGTON REDSKINS ESPN	1			

Monday, November 7, 2005

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS P-6:00 PM C-8:00 PM E-9:00 PM NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS ABC	3			

Bye weeks:
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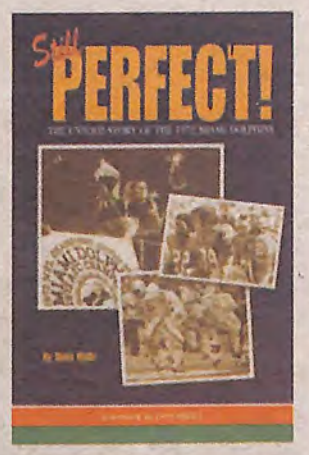

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